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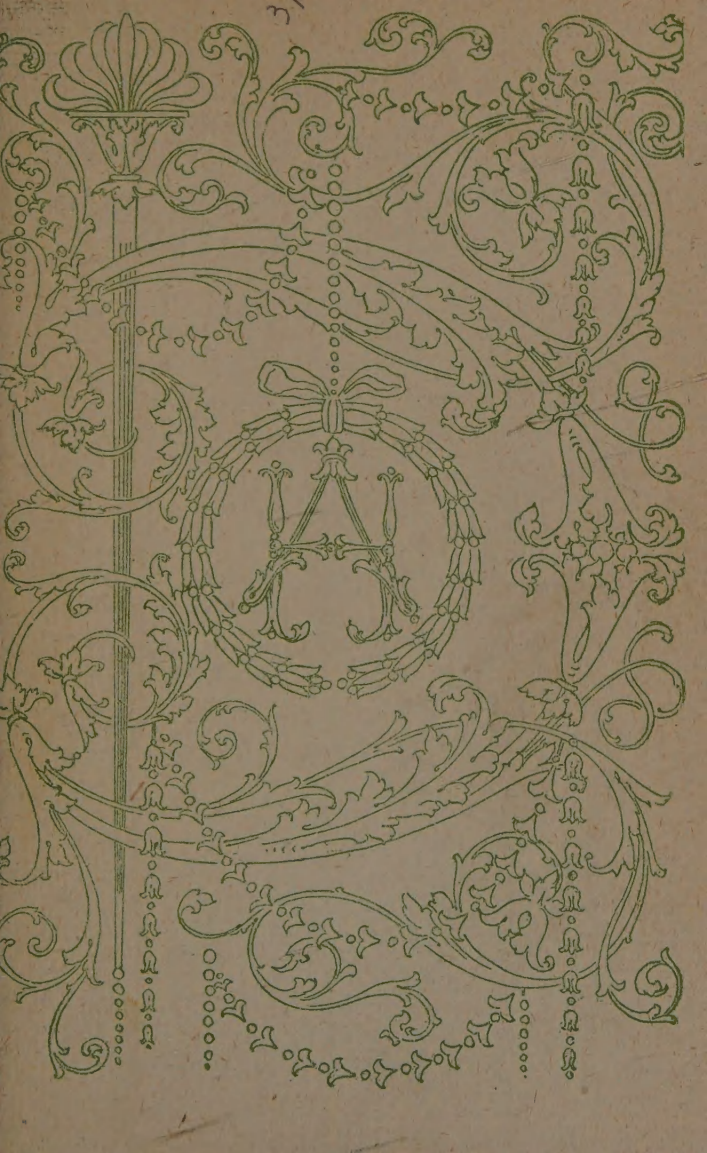

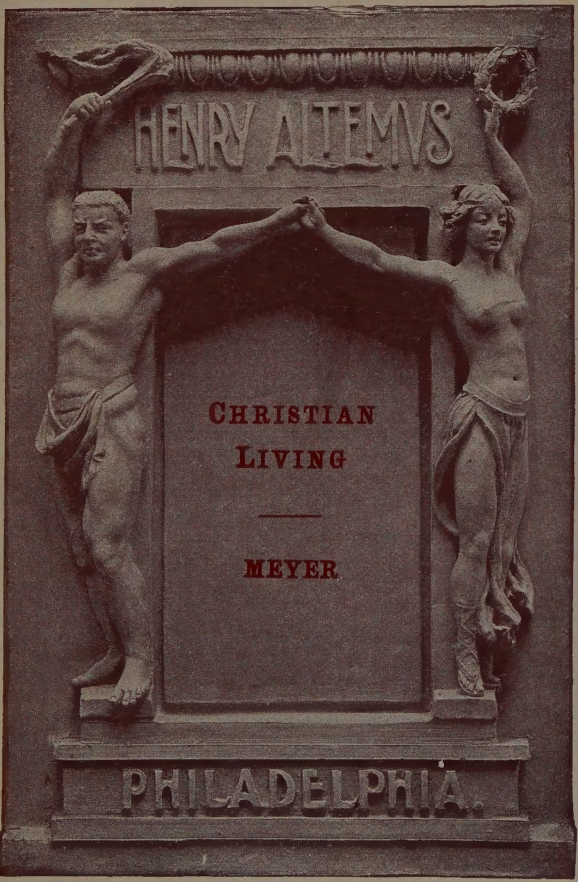
HENRY ALTEMUS
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HENRY ALTEMUS

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PREFACE

These chapters contain the essence of Addresses delivered at several Conferences and Missions, in which they have been wonderfully used to the quickening of the children of God.

Looked at in this form, they seem as unlikely to produce life as the rod which was laid in vain on the face of the dead child (2 Kings iv. 31). Yet may He who caused the rod of Aaron to bud and bear fruit graciously bless these words after like manner; and use them to answer some of the questions which are being so eagerly asked on all sides, as to the attainment of a nobler ideal of Christian Living.

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CONTENTS.

PART		PAGE
I.	The Appropriation of Christ	7
II.	Christ's Proprietorship	28
III.	Reciprocal Indwelling	44
IV.	"Sin" and "Sins"	63
V.	The Will	85
VI.	Guidance	106
VII.	The Fulness of the Spirit	129
VIII.	Our Work for Christ	153
IX.	Concluding Words	172

CHRISTIAN LIVING.

I.

The Appropriation of Christ.

Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.—Romans xiii. 14.

At the beginning of the Christian life, for the most part at least, we try to *imitate* Jesus Christ. There is Scriptural warrant for our doing so. And the time will never come when we may not look up to Him as our model and ideal, with that eager, longing gaze which must exert something of a transforming influence. But if this be all, we shall find our Christian life one of unutterable disappointment and sorrow. The infinite beauty and glory of our ideal must

ever distance our noblest efforts, as the inaccessible heights of the Jungfrau, clad in untrodden snows, rise higher and ever higher above the traveler as he approaches them along the valley at their foot.

In a railway carriage recently I was attracted by the earnest look on the face of a young man who was reading "The Imitation of Christ." Some kinship of spirit drew me to his side, and the conversation naturally opened by a reference to the holy meditations of the almost unknown saint, which has become part of the household literature of the Church. Without depreciating that precious manual of the holy life, I ventured to suggest that "imitation" alone was insufficient for the purpose we had in view, and that there was a more excellent way.

Years ago, when a lad at school, there

was failure in my attempts to imitate with clumsy fingers the smooth copper-plate at the head of my copy-book, nor was there better success in the endeavor to imitate the finished drawing placed upon the easel; and the captain of the school could throw cricket-ball and hammer for almost as many yards as the slender arms of his imitator could throw them feet. Yes, and as year after year I have tried to imitate the matchless glories of Jesus Christ, there has been the same weary sense of failure, beneath which heart and hope have sunk down baffled and disappointed.

There is another word which carries with it the inspiration of a new hope and speaks of the possibilities of faith —the word Appropriation. Let us not be content with the effort to imitate Christ; let us appropriate Him, as the

flowers of spring and the fruits of autumn appropriate the properties of the sap and dew and balmy air, and all the glorious forces that lie hid in sunbeams.

This thought is Scriptural. What is it but another way of expressing the Apostle's exhortation to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ"? (Rom. xiii. 14). In Him, by the good pleasure of the Father, all fulness dwells, that we might receive of it grace upon grace; and that reception is but another term for appropriation. In giving us His Son, the Father hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness; but that gracious provision avails us nothing until we claim and appropriate it by a living faith. The promises are all ours: but they are vain until we lay upon them the hand of appropriating proprietorship; and, as heirs, enter upon our

inheritance. All true faith must have in it this thought of appropriation. We first know by hearing what are our glorious privileges and rights. Then we reckon that the record is true. And, finally, we begin to use that which has been so freely given. Like the pilgrim-saints of olden days, "we are persuaded of them, and embrace them." (Heb. xi. 13.)

This thought is also confirmed by experience. A little group of earnest men were gathered not long ago around a fire, eagerly discussing the methods of a holy life, and reciting their own experiences of the grace of God. One had recently entered upon the gladness of a life of entire consecration, and spoke fervently of his new-found joys. But when his story was told, a venerable clergyman expressed his disappointment at an experi-

ence which was only negative, and told so little of the positive side of the appropriation of Christ.

Years before, when engaged in a gathering of unruly and noisy children, he had been suddenly driven to claim from the Saviour the gift of his own gentle patience, in the words, "Thy patience, Lord!" And instantly so divine a calm filled his spirit that he realized that he had made a great discovery. And from that moment he had retained the extremes of his brief petition, inserting between them the grace, the lack of which was hurrying him to sin. In moments of weakness, "Thy strength, Lord!" or in moments of conscious strength, "Thy humility, Lord!" When assailed by unholy suggestions, "Thy purity, Lord!" or when passing through deep waters of trial, "Thy resignation

and restfulness, Lord!" What is this but a living example of the appropriation of Christ?

This thought would light up the darkest, saddest life. We sadly chide ourselves for our failures; and yet we are oppressed by the weary consciousness that we are all too likely to repeat them. We catch glimpses of ideals in the lives of others, and in our own happier moments, that only mock us. We fail to adorn the Gospel of God our Saviour in all things, because we lack the materials for the beautiful garments of our array. And all this because we do not realize that all of Jesus is for us; only waiting for us to appropriate it with exceeding joy.

Jesus Christ is an Armory, in which hang armor for defence, and weapons for attack. Happy is he who has learned

to enter the sacred arsenal, to gird on the breast-plate and helmet, and to lay his hand to spear and sword! Christ is a Banqueting-house, in which the tables groan beneath the weight of all that is needed for the supply of appetite and the gratification of taste. Happy is he who makes free of the rich provision, and comes to it whenever he needs! Christ is a Surgery, stored with all manner of restoratives and blessed elixirs; nor lacks an ointment for every wound, a cordial for every faintness, a remedy for every disease. Happy is he who is well-skilled in heavenly pharmacy, and knoweth how to avail himself of his healing virtues: Christ is the Jewel-room, in which the graces of the Christian are held in strong and safe keeping. Happy is he who knows which is the key to the massive doors, so that he can

go in and out at his will, and array himself in "whatsoever things are lovely, and whatsoever things are of good report!" With burning words like these the saintly heart expatiates on the fulness of Christ. But, after all, how inadequate the words are to express all the rapture, the strength, the grace, which become the spending-money of the man who has learned to appropriate the Lord Jesus! He moves from the attic into comfortable apartments. He becomes a first-class traveler by the most luxurious route. He no longer laments his leanness, but cries with the ring of a new hope, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

It is difficult—nay, impossible—to employ words sufficiently emphatic, or forcible, to enforce this habit of Christ-appropriation on Christian hearts. Suf-

fice it to say that it would be as life from the dead for many who read these lines, and whose life has been a series of disappointments. Let us work it out in one or two directions, as suggested by the Apostle when he says: "Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Cor. i. 30.) Let us

I. APPROPRIATE CHRIST AS OUR WISDOM.

Many true Christians find it difficult to know the will of God. They long to do it, if only they knew it; but it is hidden from their eyes. "Should I move to another town?" "Should I take such a step in business?" Should I enter into such a partnership, or ally myself with such an enterprise?" "Should I

embark in this new branch of Christian activity?" Such questions are constantly arising and pressing for an answer in all our lives; and as they do so they excite the instant inquiry, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

But how may we know God's will? That is not always easy. Yet the difficulty is not in Him. He does not wish us to grope painfully in the dark. Nay, He is ever giving us many signs and hints as to the way we should take, too delicate to be perceived by the coarse eye of sense, but clear enough to those who are divested of self-will and pride, and only anxious to know and do the holy and acceptable and perfect will of God.

It is a mistake to seek a sign from heaven; to run from counsellor to counsellor; to cast a lot; or to trust to some chance coincidence. Not that God may

not reveal His will thus; but because it is hardly the behavior of a child with its Father. There is a more excellent way. Let the heart be quieted and stilled in the presence of God; weaned from all earthly distractions and worldly ambitions. Let the voice of the Son of God hush into perfect rest the storms that sweep the lake of the inner life, and ruffle its calm surface. Let the whole being be centred on God Himself. And then, remembering that all who lack wisdom are to ask it of God, and that Jesus Christ is already made unto us wisdom, let us quietly appropriate Him, in that capacity, by faith: and then go forward, perhaps not conscious of any increase of wisdom, or able to see far in front; but sure that we shall be guided, as each new step must be taken, or word spoken, or decision made. It is an immense help in any

difficulty to say, "I take thee, Lord Jesus, as my wisdom," and to do the next thing, nothing doubting; assured that He will not permit those who trust in Him to be ashamed.

II. LET US APPROPRIATE CHRIST AS OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

It is not necessary to convince the readers of these lines that they need a righteousness, in whose stainless white they may stand accepted before the Holy Father. That, alas! is but too apparent. Conscious of our nakedness and sin, we once sought to establish our own righteousness, stitching together the fig-leaves, which died as we plucked them, and became sere and shriveled. But since then we have submitted ourselves to the righteousness of God; which is by

faith. There is often, however, an apparent doubt in Christian hearts as to their relation to that righteousness; and they do not realize that, whether they feel it or not, it is, nevertheless, covering them, in all its radiant beauty; for in the thought of God, every believer is arrayed in the beauteous dress of the Saviour's finished work. "It is UPON all them that believe." (Rom. iii. 22.) There is only one kind of faith, and directly it is exercised, though amid many doubts and fears, the believer is justified, accepted in the Beloved, and accounted not only as forgiven, but as righteous in the sight of God. This is so, whether it be realized or not.

The first moment of faith is the time when we begin to appropriate the righteousness of Christ. At first it is with trembling hands that we gird ourselves

in the dress that cost our Lord so much. We fear, as we enter the most holy place, and stand where angels worship; but, as the days pass on, and we learn more of its efficiency, its adaptation to our need, and its preciousness in the sight of God, we become more assured of our position, and notwithstanding repeated failures in the past, the misgivings of nature, and the taunts of hell, we have boldness to enter into that which is within the vail.

Jesus Christ has been made to us righteousness by God; but He needs to be appropriated by faith when we are first convinced of sin, and ever after, when conscious of our worthlessness and guilt. How triumphant the ejaculation, "Jesus, I flee unto Thee to hide me; I appropriate Thee as my righteousness before God!"

"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God: for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."

III. LET US APPROPRIATE CHRIST AS OUR SANCTIFICATION.

Sanctification is separation—separation from sin; separation to God, to the point of devotion. There often arises before us the vision of a devoted life; such a life as Jesus lived, whose only thought was to do the will of God. To recognize God as the sole source of holiness. To lean on Him, and to listen for His voice within the heart as the sole and sufficient guide. To live apart from the restless aims and fretting ambitions of men. To be separate from

sin—holy, harmless, and without rebuke. To keep ever in touch with God and His thoughts and aims. To obey him at all hazards and costs. To be the channel through which the river of God may flow down into earth's desert places, making them rejoice and blossom—ah, what an ideal is here!

Yet at first this ideal mocks us sorely. It is high, we cannot attain unto it. And we shall be beaten by repeated failures until we learn the secret, which is just now our chosen theme. Apart from that, there is nothing for us, but sadly to renounce the bright vision as impossible; though perhaps reserved for saintly hearts which spend their time in cloistered piety.

But it is brought within the range of the humblest and weakest disciple, who renounces all hope of realizing it

through nature's efforts, and who appropriates Christ in his all-sufficiency. Trust the Holy Spirit to work in you a perpetual remembrance of the Lord Jesus; and then avail yourself of Him in all His offices and work. And amongst other aspects, be sure to appropriate Him as your sanctification. When tempted to cross the line of separation, or to relax the energy of your devotion, look upward, and say, "Be Thou to me in fact that which the Father has already made Thee, in possibility and by right, my Sanctification."

IV. LET US APPROPRIATE CHRIST AS OUR REDEMPTION.

We have been redeemed from the curse of the law, because He was made

curse for us. But we long to be redeemed from the power of sin. "The good we would, we do not; the evil we would not, we do." And this longing shall be met; because it would not be like our God to leave us to the mercy of the strong Pharaoh-like foes, which have made us serve under cruel bondage for so long. He must come down to deliver us. Ah, what joyful news it is that He has done so, and has provided a sufficient deliverance in Jesus.

But this redemption waits our appropriation, as the flowers of spring await the hand of the flower-girl; or as the deliverance wrought for the Jews by Mordecai awaited their personal action, which made it their own. From this moment give up your strivings and endeavors, and take Christ as your deliverance from all the sins which have

broken your peace, and cursed your joy. When the oppressor approaches you; when the old habit seeks to assert itself; when easily besetting sin begins to weave its snare about you, or suddenly to assail—then look up to the Saviour, and say, "I appropriate Thee as my redemption in this my hour of need!"

A lady traveling in the Southern States, after President Lincoln had proclaimed the freedom of the slaves, found a black woman, who was acting as a slave, because she did not know that her race was free. She had heard rumors, which her owner and others had denounced as lies. But as soon as she knew that she was free, she appropriated her freedom, and went forth into liberty. Let it be clearly understood that the Son has made us free, who bear His name; let us avail ourselves of our

right; and go forth into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

This is the secret, then, of a glad and victorious life, unshadowed by cloud or defeat: Jesus Christ for all who believe; awaiting only the appropriation of the most trembling hand stretched out toward Him in expectation of faith.

It is a goodly land which the Lord our God giveth us in which scarceness and penury are unknown. Let us not linger on the threshold, but go in to possess it with songs and thanksgiving.

II.

Christ's Proprietorship.

Whose I am, and Whom I serve.—Acts xxvii. 23.

In the "Song of Songs, which is Solomon's," there is a beautiful gradation of expression, which significantly illustrates the successive steps in the experience of the soul. Thrice does the bride speak of the Bridegroom in similar terms; but in each case there is a slight alteration in the phraseology, which speaks volumes of her deepening character, and truer attitude towards Him.

"My beloved is mine, and I am His." (Song of Solomon ii. 16.) "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine."

(vi. 3.) "I am my Beloved's, and His desire is toward me." (vii. 10.)

At first she lays the chief stress on the thought that all her Beloved was hers, and that she had a right to employ concerning Him the appropriating pronoun *My;* it was only a secondary consideration that she was also *His.*

But as her thought ran on, she changed the relative place of the two clauses of the sentence, and laid her primal emphasis not on her appropriation of Him, but on His proprietorship of her: "I am His."

And, lastly, this conception so filled her mind that she had no thought of her side of the matter, and was altogether absorbed in the happy consciousness that she belonged utterly, and for ever, to the object of her supreme and adoring love.

This is also the history of each scholar in the school of grace. We begin by calculating how much there is in Christ for us. We appropriate His fulness, and count ourselves millionaires in His wealth. And there is no wrong or harm in this. But, as the days pass on, we realize that there is a yet profounder truth on which this rests; and to have *that* is to have in addition all that Christ can be and do for the soul which clings to Him—as the limpet to the rock on which the long line of waves breaks, with boom of thunder and clouds of spray, without detaching it from its hold. We begin by saying, *Christ is Mine:* we go on to say, *I am His.* We pass from the appropriation of Christ by us to the proprietorship of us by Christ. And this is surely a happier and better standing-

ground: because the hand, which appropriates only, may become numbed and tired; but that which is locked in the hand of Christ, in the tight grasp of ownership, that can never be withdrawn.

Did you, my Christian reader, ever realize the conception that you are absolutely Christ's? You may not own it: you may not live beneath its power: nay, you may seek to cast the thought aside; as Onesimus, who, when he fled from Ephesus to hide himself, truant that he was, in the slums of Rome, tried to forget the claims which Philemon, his master, had over him, by right of purchase. All this you may do: and yet, in spite of all, you are as much Christ's property as any slave would be the chattel of the man who had paid down his price in the market, or who

had received him as part of the family estate by right of inheritance.

And not only are *you* the property of Christ; but all you are and have is His also. The master owns not only the slave, but all the proceeds of his toils; and all the personal or other property which he may acquire. The hapless serf can point to nothing as his; all is his master's. He is but a steward, bound to account for the way in which every coin is expended; at the best permitted to deduct from the general proceeds of the estate only a bare sufficiency for his personal maintenance; but expected to forward all the rest to his master, or expend it on such interests as he may direct. This is our rightful position with respect to Christ. Paul was proud to call himself the bond-slave of Jesus Christ. He chose

as his motto the immortal words (badge of a slavery which does not degrade, but ennobles all who bend beneath its yoke), "Whose I am, and whom I serve."

I. CHRIST'S PROPRIETORSHIP RESTS ON MANY GROUNDS.

We are His *by Creation:* His image and superscription have been stamped upon ever lineament of our face, though almost obliterated as the effigy of the sovereign from a well-worn coin. "It is He that hath made us, and His we are."

We are His *by Purchase:* for never was slave more certainly acquired by silver and gold than we have been bought by His precious blood. "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price, wherefore glorify God in your

body and in your spirit, which are His."

We are His *by Deed of Gift:* for the Father has given to Him all who shall come to Him; and it is impossible to believe that donation could be of anything less than our whole being. When God gave us, He gave all of us.

We are His *by Conquest:* for the Man-soul of our inner nature has opened to Him her gates, unable longer to resist; and, even though He be not as yet recognized in all her environs, there is no doubt that He is her rightful Lord and King.

Ah! it is impossible to escape the fact, that in the thought of God, and according to the rights of the case, we are the absolute property of Jesus Christ, our Lord: and that He thinks much of that fact, is evident in the fre-

quent references of His High priestly prayer (John xvii.), though we, alas! are too forgetful of His claims.

II. THE ACT OF CONSECRATION CONSISTS IN THE RECOGNITION OF CHRIST'S ABSOLUTE PROPRIETORSHIP.

Men often ask and wonder what that consecration is to which they are urged. They suppose that it is something altogether over and beyond what is expected from ordinary Christians. But this is a profound mistake. Consecration is simply giving Christ His own, and restoring stolen property to its rightful owner. Consecration is to give to Christ by choice that which is His by indefeasible right; but which He will not snatch from any one.

The men of Israel were David's by God's appointment; but they could not

rest content until they had swum the Jordan at its flood, and had fallen at the feet of their rightful king, crying, "Thine are we, David; and on thy side, thou son of Jesse." (1 Chron. xii. 1-18.) Should we be content without saying as much to our Saviour, Jesus?

Of course we all in a general way recognize Christ's ownership. "We are His people, and the sheep of His pasture." But we must do it in a particular and personal sense. We must crown Him King of our hearts and lives by our own glad choice. We must bring the whole of our nature and life under His direct control. We must be willing that His will should be as supreme, and as universally honored, in us, as it is in His own bright home. We must come to the point of saying something like this: "Lord Jesus, I

am Thine by right; forgive me for having lived so long as if I were my own. I now gladly recognize that Thou hast a rightful claim on all I have and am; I want to live as Thine from henceforth; and I do solemnly at this hour give myself to Thee, by my own glad choice: Thine entirely: Thine in life and death: Thine forever."

III. THERE ARE A FEW CAUTIONS AND DIRECTIONS NECESSARY IN THIS ACT OF CONSECRATION.

(1) The act of consecration is the taking-up of an attitude, which must never be renounced; or if it is lost for a moment, it must instantly be resumed, with prayer for forgiveness and for cleansing. But this is only possible through the gracious aid of the Eternal

Spirit, through whom the Lord Jesus offered Himself without spot to God; and through whom alone, we shall be able to take up and maintain this sacred attitude.

(2) As the light grows we shall become increasingly aware of new departments of our heart and life, that were not consciously included in our first glad act of surrender. But as they come to view, we must hand them also into the governorship of the King. We must send them on, as we might send on the loose sheets of a book to a friend, who had already taken away the bulk.

(3) There is no reason, in the nature of the case, why the children of God should not become consecrated from the very moment of conversion. It should be the normal state of Christians. And with many it is so. Re-

deemed from eternal death, they instantly give themselves to their Deliverer, as those alive from the dead. But with most this is not the case. And so it is necessary, at some future period of their lives, when the claims of Christ suddenly break on them, that they should come to the definite point of self-surrender.

(4) It matters little when, and how, we do it; whether by speech, or in writing; whether alone, or in company. But we must not be content with a vague desire. There should be a definite act, at a given moment of time, when we shall gladly sign, and seal, and confess, that we are His. (Isaiah xliv. 5.)

(5) Sometimes we may feel unable to GIVE all; but we are willing that He should TAKE all. This is equally acceptable to Him. And is it not a better

and more scriptural way of putting the truth? For we might be troubled by grievous questionings, as to whether we had really given *all,* or whether there were not some fatal flaw in our act. But if the question is simply one of His taking—or of our being willing for Him to take—entire possession; so that every imagination is cast down, every thought brought into captivity, and our wills moulded into harmony with His: then rough places are made smooth, and crooked ones straight. This is the charm of Miss Havergal's Consecration Hymn; its key-word is—TAKE!

(6) The ACT OF CONSECRATION is cancelled by one reserve. To give ninety-nine parts and to withold the hundredth undoes the whole transaction; because in that one piece of reserve the whole of the self-life en-

trenches itself, defying Him. It may seem impossible to renounce that one thing; but in clinging to it, you forego for ever all right to His blessed fulness. The electrician cannot charge your body with electricity while a single thread connects you with the ground, and breaks the completeness of your insulation. The physician cannot undertake your case whilst you conceal one symptom, or yourself seek to effect a cure in one particular. The Lord Jesus cannot fully save you whilst there is one point of controversy between you and Him. Let Him have that one last thing, the last barrier and film to a life of blessedness; and glory will come, filling your soul.

(7) What we give, Christ takes; and at the moment of our giving it. There may, perhaps, be no rush of emotion.

We may have no inward evidence of the momentous change in our position. The reckoning may have for many days to be one, not of feeling, but of faith. We can only say, "I am His; because I gave, and He took." But sooner or later we become aware that the flames of the heavenly fire have fallen on our sacrifice; feeding on it; appropriating it; cleansing it; and preparing it for blessed, holy service.

It is very important to realize this point. In consecration we make the same mistake, as is so prevalent in conversion: of trying to feel in ourselves that Christ has taken us. We must believe He takes that which we commit to Him; though no angel comes to assure us that we are henceforth His own.

What we give, God takes; and He takes it in fire. We do not always real-

ize all that is involved. But it is sublime to tread the glowing embers of that fire, with the Son of God at our side, knowing that the restraining bonds are shrivelling at every step, and that not a hair of our head can perish.

This is CONSECRATION. And from this glad hour the surrendered one dares to begin appropriating Christ: a blessed habit, which by the grace of the Holy Spirit becomes the practice of the life. Reader, be persuaded to take this step. Seek some lonely spot, some still hour, and give yourself to Him who gave Himself for you on the Cross; and who waits to give Himself continually to you in response to the claims of your appropriating faith.

III.

Reciprocal Indwelling.

Abide in me, and I in you.—John xv. 4.

"That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life" was the aspiration of the man after God's own heart. (Psalm xxvii. 4.) It became his saintly soul, but it cannot be literally realized in these days, when there is no longer a material earthly sanctuary. And yet there is a sense in which that wish may be verified in the history of us all. What is "the house of the Lord," but the conscious presence of the Lord? And they who have acquired the blessed habit of perpetually recollecting the nearness of Jesus know something, at least, of that "dwelling in

the secret place of the Most High," and "abiding under the shadow of the Almighty," of which the Psalmist sang. (Psalm xci.)

If only we could acquire that blessed habit, and maintain that hallowed attitude of spirit, we should need few exhortations beside. We should be perfectly satisfied with—Himself. We should hold all things in Him. We should fear no foe, fighting under the Captain's eye. We should be set free from the power of besetting sin, as the fire in our grates is extinguished when the sun shines brilliantly upon the glowing embers. How strong—how sweet—how happy—should we be, if only we could dwell in the unbroken enjoyment of the presence of the King!—so that He should be first in every thought, and act, and moment of life.

You say that this may be possible for the priest, or the saint, but not for those who are harassed with daily care: for the cloister, but not for the market: for the holy day, but not for the working day, with its dust and clamor. Yet, surely, since the Master bids us all to abide in Him, and stays not to limit His meaning, or define the character of those who are welcome to stand continually in His presence, we must infer that He wishes to make no distinction, but to admit all His servants to share in the bright and blessed privilege.

But can the mind be occupied with two thoughts at once? Perhaps not: yet—though it may be impossible for the mind to entertain at the same instant more than one train of ideas—beneath the mind there is the heart, with all its sensibilities and deep emotional

life, instantly and always alive to the presence or absence of some beloved object, even when the mind is most busily engaged.

The orator is conscious of the presence and appreciation of his audience, even when his intellect is most busily engaged in furnishing the thought which he is uttering. The business man, absorbed in counting up his books, whilst his wife is quietly occupied with her work by his side, is aware of her sweet presence, at the very moment when he is adding up the longest column of figures. The young mother may be very busy about the house, tidying the rooms in the upper stories, but her heart is always on the alert for the cry of the babe, whose crib is beside the kitchen fire. So we may be fully occupied in thought and act, and yet our

dwelling of the believer in Christ, and Christ in the believer. Take the common iron poker from your fireside, and place it amid the fiery bed of burning coals, and soon it becomes red-hot, because the fire is in it whilst it is in the fire. Shall the time not come when we shall learn the secret of a life of ardent devotion and glowing zeal, because we have mastered the lesson of the reciprocal indwelling of the saint and the Saviour?

This was the secret of the human life of Christ. He dwelt in His Father's love, whilst there rang through His being the glad consciousness that He did always those things which gave pleasure to His Father's heart. And the Father dwelt in Him, manifesting His Divine presence by words of grace and works of power. Have you ever truly realized

that Jesus Christ is literally within you —the Divine tenant and occupant of the inner shrine? Do not feel obliged to dilute or water down this wondrous fact, as if it were too marvelous to be accepted in its literal force. We cannot understand it; we cannot reason it out with our poor logic; we cannot account for it; we can only sit down in amazed wonder and exclaim, "Wherefore is this come to me, that I should be a temple for the Lord God of Hosts?" And when once we can realize the literal force of "in you," we shall enter upon the glorious and perpetual enjoyment of "ye in Me." The two are reciprocal: and the measure of our appreciation of the one is the measure of our enjoyment of the other.

There are four texts in the New Testament in which the truth of this reci-

procity of indwelling is taught, each time with a specific purpose.

I. As to Fellowship—"He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in me, and I in Him." (John vi. 56.) Whatever else is meant by that mystic feeding on Christ, this at least is included—that, through the help of the Holy Ghost, we are to set apart daily periods of time for fellowship with the living Saviour. The early morning hour, when we go forth to gather manna, while the day is young; the evening twilight when men go forth to meditate; the hour of solemn worship and gathering with the people of God: all these, and many other golden seasons, are opportunities of nourishing the inner life, with His flesh, which is meat indeed, and His blood, which is drink indeed.

But how often, at such times, the spirit seems to fail and faint! It cannot disengage itself from the birdlime of worldliness which fastens it down. It cannot shake off the buzzing cloud of teazing, wandering thoughts. It resembles, as Jeremy Taylor says, a lark trying in vain to rise against a strong east wind.

What then should be our resource? We may turn from personal supplication to intercession on the behalf of others; or we may open the Word of God, and begin to study its pages, as men pour water into a dry pump to make it draw; or we may appropriate the prayers of the saints of former days. But there is a more excellent way. Let us sit quietly down to meditate. Let us remember that the living Saviour, who ever liveth to pray, is by the Holy Spirit,

literally within us. He who, in the days of His flesh, climbed the mountains for fellowship with His Father, while the towns that bordered on the lake were still swathed in morning mist, is now dwelling in the heart. Stand aside, then, cease your strivings and efforts; and let Him pour forth in and through you the mighty torrent of His strong cryings and ceaseless prayers.

It will not be long before you find your prayers mounting up with freedom and conscious power to heaven; and in a moment, by the reciprocity which we are now considering, you shall become aware of the literal presence around you—as a Divine environment—of Him who once lit up the lone isle of Patmos by the irradiation of His manifested glory.

II. As to Obedience.—"He that

keepeth His commandments, dwelleth in Him, and He in him." (1 John iii. 24.) There are three things which must focus in one point before we can be sure of the will of God: The prompting of the Spirit within; the teaching of the Word without; and the concurrence of Providence around—in the events of daily life. We should never take a step unless these three concur. If they do not so concur, we may be sure that God's hour is not yet come, and we must stand still and see His salvation.

But there are times when we clearly know the Lord's will, but seem unable to do it. Our heart and flesh fail. We cower before strong opposition. The good we would, we do not: the evil we would not, we do.

How shall we do then? Shall we

lash ourselves forward by reproaches and remonstrances, as the galley-slaves of old were urged to more frantic exertions by the strokes of the knout? Not so! We are no longer under the law, but under grace. God does not leave us thus to cope with ourselves. There is another and a better way, which lies within the text already cited, if its identical propositions are reversed, "He that dwelleth in Him, and He in him, keepeth His commandments."

Remember, again, that the Lord Jesus is in you as the very power of God. During His earthly life He bore the significant title of "Servant" of God, who, when the Lord God opened His ear, was not rebellious nor turned away back, nor swerved a hair's-breadth from the narrow path of implicit obedience. (Psalm xvii. 1-6.) Why should

not He work in you and through you, as of old He wrought through His mortal body? Let Him have the opportunity! Cease from your own works, as the Son did from His. And as He emptied Himself, so that the Father which dwelt in Him was really the doer of His works, so empty yourself of your own efforts and strivings, and let Him work in you to will and to do of His own good pleasure. You will soon be delivered from impotence, and indolence, and failure, and you will find yourself energized mightily in all manner of strenuous and noble deeds.

And this will be the result by the law of reciprocity, which we are elaborating—that you will become aware of the literal presence of Him who appeared to Joshua as the Captain of the Lord's

host. You will be ready to kneel before Him in lowly homage, and to await His commands; and you will carry with you a consciousness of the fact that you are ever living in the very midst of the encompassing glory of the King of saints. "In Him we live, and move, and have our being." (Acts xvii. 28.)

III. As to Confession.—"Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." (1 John iv. 15.) The days are past in which every confessor was called to be a martyr. And yet confession is hard enough: it is not easy to stand up for Christ in the commercial room, or in the workshop, in the railway carriage, or amid the frivolities of a drawing-room. There is a natural proneness in us all to a false shame, which gags our mouths, and chokes our utterance, and

keeps us silent, when we know we ought to speak.

Ah, how bitterly we reproach ourselves then and afterwards; as we see the opening gradually close, and feel that the chance for quiet remonstrance, or for words of entreaty and expostulation, has gone never to return. (Rev. ii. 13.)

And yet we have failed so often, we have almost lost heart. Can it ever be different, we being what we are? Can we ever resemble Antipas, the faithful confessor? Can we ever be bold as a lion for Him who has never given us just cause for shame? Indeed, matters will never mend until we abandon our own feeble attempts and draw heavily on the glorious fact of His mighty indwelling. We can do nothing; but all things are possible to Him. Let us

only give Him a chance. Let us place ourselves at His disposal to speak in us, and through us, as He will. Let Him have His blessed way with us. Before Pontius Pilate He witnessed a good confession: why may we not expect Him to repeat it, through us, the meanest of the members of His body; who long to be possessed of Him, even as of old men were the mediums through which lost spirits spoke and wrought.

And none can thus abandon themselves to Him without becoming aware, through the law of reciprocal indwelling, that Christ in the heart means the heart in Christ; and that dependence on the indwelling Saviour will invariably induce a vivid consciousness of the indwelling of the human spirit in the light of His gracious presence.

IV. As to Love.—"He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in Him." (1 John iv. 16.) We must love people whom we cannot like; with whom we have no natural sympathy; and who seem made to irritate us. It is easy to like nice people. No special grace is required for this. Our affections naturally entwine around the amiable and gentle; and, if these alone filled our homes, there would be no education in the Divine art of loving. We only learn what the love of God is when we have to do with the people who defy our own powers of affection. The fairest powers of nature are never so apparent as when they are called in to drape the rents in the earth's surface, or to clothe some unsightly rock, rearing its form amid a paradise of beauty.

Is there such a person in your life,

the source of constant chafe, annoyance, fret? You feel you cannot love, you cannot speak gently, or stroke that fretful face, or find pleasure in that uncongenial presence? Anything but that. You could be lovely if only you were thrown with a congenial temperament. Yet how much you would miss of Divine education! Do this. Fall back on the memory of the Divine indwelling: and since the strong Son of God, who is Immortal Love, is in you, let Him love that loveless one through you; let Him pour a torrent of love through you, as the channel and medium of blessing; let His love speak through your voice, and look through your eyes, and nerve your fingers. Love with His love. You can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth you.

And, again, let us repeat it. You

will find that you cannot act thus without bringing into operation that reciprocity of indwelling which is our theme; and you will know, as never before, what it is to have Christ encompassing you behind and before, and covering you with the warm, safe protection of those feathers, to which He called Jerusalem. (Matt. xxiii. 37; Luke xiii. 34.)

What more need we say? The Spirit can alone reveal the truth we try to teach. But He will gladly perform this His appointed office. And thus we shall come to understand what it is ever "to dwell in the secret place of the Most High, and to abide under the shadow of the Almighty." (Psalm xci. 7.)

IV.

"Sin" and "Sins."

Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. —Rom. vi. 11.

The nearer we live to God, the more sensitive we become to the presence of sin. Increasing light means increasing self-judgment; and things which were allowed in the twilight of the dawn, become abhorrent as the noontide light reveals their true character. You may gauge your growth in grace, and your increasing reception of the Holy Spirit, by the tenderness of your conscience with respect to sins which you once permitted without remorse, and almost

without remark. In proportion as you comprehend the full beauty of Christ your Lord, you will find imperfections in your best moments, and discern blemishes in your holiest deeds. When we *hear* of God, we are self-satisfied; but when we *see* Him, we abhor ourselves, and repent in dust and ashes.

In view of these facts it is impossible for any true child of God to be contented with himself. He cannot speak of himself as having attained, or as being already perfect. He is ever following after to apprehend or attain; and as he does so, he, who once described himself as the least of all saints, comes to call himself the chief of sinners. He is conscious of forgiveness; he knows that he is accepted in the Beloved; but, in proportion as he walks in the growing light, he feels his growing

need of the precious blood, which cleanseth from all sin.

It is true that many claim to have attained a condition of sinless perfectness; but they surely fail to discriminate between things which differ widely as the poles. They do not distinguish between the believer's standing in Christ Jesus, in the sight of God, and the practical realization and appropriation of that standing, which can only be in proportion to his faith. According to our faith, so it is to us; and, as faith is ever growing towards perfect vision, is it not clear that there must also be a growth towards the perfect appreciation and enjoyment of our standing in Christ Jesus?

And is there not this also, that there is a whole world of difference between freedom from conscious sin and the at-

tainment of the perfect glory of the stature of Christ? The one is negative; the other is positive. The one is according to the dim light of human consciousness; the other is according to the Divine standard of infinite excellence. The one is within the reach of the young disciple, and ranks among the elements of Christ; the other is still in advance of the holiest saint among the ranks of the redeemed, and always will be.

When we come short, we sin.

As soon as we put ourselves in the true relation to the Spirit of God, we may expect to be kept from conscious sin; but surely this is a very different thing from the perfection of the New Testament, which is the maturity of the fully developed man. Even if we have passed from the adolescence to the manhood of Christian development, there is

still an infinite chasm between our uttermost attainment, and the surpassing loveliness of the One Perfect Man.

Who of us has not also had some such experience as this—that we condemn things which passed muster years ago? Is not this the law of growing excellence in all art, in all knowledge? Does not the singer, the painter, the writer, the poet, detect blemishes and flaws where once the judgment rested with entire acquiescence and content?

And then, too, must not this be always so, as long as there is progress in any direction along which the energies of the soul may work? And if this be so, is it not almost certain that we permit and harbor things to-day which we shall be the first to condemn when years have passed; just as we condemn things to-day which, for want of fuller light,

seemed harmless enough in the days of our ignorance? But, under such circumstances, how can we say that we are perfect? How can we speak of ourselves as sinless? How can we ever get beyond the need of humbly confessing that we are sinners? How can we do without the constant washing in the laver of priests?

There are three matters which must be considered in connection with the believer's inner experience of evil:

I. THE TEMPTER.

"Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist." (1 Peter v. 8, 9.)

It is not necessary to suppose that the prince of the power of the air is the au-

thor of temptation to every believer, the world over; for that would go near to investing him with the attributes of omniscience and omnipresence. But he is surrounded by legions of inferior spirits, the wicked spirits in heavenly places, as malignant in their hate as he is; and who are ever waiting to carry out his plans: and any one of these is sufficient to master the soul that has not learnt the secret of victory through faith in the Stronger than the strong man armed.

It is a commonplace in Christian ethics—and yet it may not be realized by every reader of these lines—that temptation does not become sin to us, until the will assents to the suggestion of the Tempter. So long as the will is resolute, exclaiming with Joseph, "How can I do this great wickedness,

and sin against God?" there is no sin. Sin is the act of the perverted will. That temptation is not sin is proved by the fact that the Lord Jesus was tempted in all points, though without sin. Of course, there is a vast difference between Him and us: because there was nothing in Him, as there is in us, responsive to the tempter's suggestions. It is difficult for us to listen to the suggestion of sin without contracting any stain; but still it may be accepted as broadly true that the fact of our being tempted does not necessarily involve us in sin.

There is only one way by which the Tempter can be met. He laughs at our good resolutions and ridicules the pledges with which we fortify ourselves. He has been dealing with these for sixty centuries, and well knows how to find

their weakest point, and to sweep them away, as the tide does the child's barricade of sand. There is only One whom he fears; One who in the hour of greatest weakness conquered him; and who has been raised far above all principality and power, that He may succor and deliver all frail and tempted souls. He conquered the prince of this world in the days of His flesh; and He is prepared to do as much again, and yet again, in each one of us, if only we will truly surrender ourselves to His gracious and mighty indwelling.

In the days of knightly chivalry it was supposed to be enough for the true soldier of the cross to make the sacred sign upon his person; and instantly the foul spirits that had gathered in the murky gloom to do him harm, fell back, and let him through. It was not all

legend and myth. But there is a truth beneath the mediæval setting. And that truth is ours to-day—that the best resource for the hardly-beset soldier of Jesus is to appeal, not to the cross, but to Him who on that cross bruised the serpent's head, not for Himself only, but for us.

There are many forms in which that appeal may be made. Some utter the name of the tempted—the succoring—High Priest: "Jesus! Jesus!" Some cry in the triumphant assurance of victory, "Jesus saves me." Some do better still, and claim that grace in Him, the lack of which is hurrying them into sin; so that temptation becomes a positive means of grace to them, by showing their deficiency, and leading them to strengthen the things which remain, but which may be languishing to death.

But whichever method you adopt, reader, be sure you do it in one way or another. Swift as the chick to the shelter of the mother's wing, so do you betake yourself to the ever-offered protection of Jesus Christ whenever menaced by the Tempter. The Lord God is not only a sun, but a shield. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe." He will "cover thy head in the day of battle." (Psalm lxxxiv. 11; Prov. xviii. 10; Psalm cxl. 7.)

It may be that you have tried to do this, and have failed. You have entered upon the day's life, fully intending to make Jesus your shield of faith, and to hide in Him when threatened by the Tempter. Yet you have found to your dismay, that you have been overcome before you have bethought yourself of

your refuge and deliverer. But there is an easy remedy for this, in the aid of the Holy Spirit. He is the Divine remembrancer. It is his office to maintain the spirit in a state of holy recollectedness; and, if the attack be as a thunderclap, He will be as the premonitory lightning flash, crying, "Beware! Beware! 'turn you to your stronghold, O prisoner of hope.'" (Zech. x. 12.)

Be sure of this, that Satan cannot tempt you beyond what you have power to sustain or resist. Powerless in yourself, you can do all things in Christ that strengtheneth you. The Lord Jesus hath bought you; and you must *trust* Him to keep you. "The Lord is thy keeper." "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved." "Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler." (Psalms cxxi. 5, 3; xci. 3.)

II. THE SINFUL TENDENCY WITHIN.

Regeneration is not the eradication of the principle of the old life, but the insertion beside it of the principle of a new life—the Christ life. And these two exist side by side; as the house of Saul and the house of David in the rent and distracted kingdom of Israel: but the one is destined to get weaker and weaker, whilst the other waxes stronger and stronger.

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and can never be anything else than flesh. It can never be improved into spirit. It can never be anything but abhorrent in the eye of the Holy God. So that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God;" and the flesh which is in us can never please God.

The only thing to be done is to deny it; and to reckon it as a dead thing, which has no place in the Home of Life. "Bury thy dead out of sight."

SELF is the anagram of FLESH. The flesh-principle is the self-principle, which so insidiously creeps into everything from which it is not rigorously excluded by the grace of God. Before we are converted self is the sole motive-power of our lives: our kindest and best actions originate in this root. And after we are converted, it strives to insinuate itself into our religious life. Satan will not prohibit us from being religious—if only "self" is the mainspring of our devotion. Hence it is that Jesus Christ is so unrelenting in His demand for self-denial. And it has been the axiom of saintship in all ages —"Wheresoever thou findest thyself,

deny thyself." Sword in hand, we must pursue this evil thing—this self-hood—through all the disguises beneath which it hides itself. We must allow it no quarter. We must believe that it is never more near or more dangerous than when it causes a rumor to be set on foot that it is no more. In the self-congratulation which arises on the receipt of this happy intelligence, there is a new and striking evidence of its continued and vigorous existence.

It is to this evil principle, which is very susceptible to the least suggestion from without, that the Tempter appeals. His attacks would be less formidable if it were not for this traitor within the citadel of the soul. But, we may well fear the bombshells thrown in from without, when we remember the magagines of gunpowder within, awaiting

the spark that shall hurry them into explosion, and shatter the rest of the soul.

There is no evidence, then, that the flesh shall ever be eradicated, because it is OURSELVES; and the Apostle clearly tells us that "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." And in those who most earnestly asseverate its eradication in their own experience, there are frequent indications of its presence still. (Gal. v. 17.)

But THIS is possible. The Holy Spirit is the deadly antagonist of, and all-sufficient antidote to, the self-life. When He dwells in blessed fulness within the surrendered heart, He sets it free from the law of sin and death: He annihilates the power of the self-life; as an antiseptic cancels the death-dealing germs which proceed from the body

of a patient who is stricken by an infectious disease.

When the Holy Spirit resides in power in the heart, He keeps the self-life so utterly in the place of death that temptation has no fascination, no power. The appeals of hell are flung against the ear of death: there is no response, no motion of obedience. Try it, reader: be not content to have the Holy Spirit within thee; see that He fills thee; and thou wilt experience that blessed condition in which the sparks of temptation shall seem to be quenched in an ocean of water, as they touch thy heart.

But remember the evil thing is there still; not eradicated, not destroyed, only kept in the place of death by the Spirit of life. And if ever thou shalt quench or limit His gracious operation, so that

He relaxes His restraining power, that accursed principle will arise with all its pristine force, join hands with the Tempter, and hurry thee into sin. Watch and pray, therefore; keep in with the Holy Ghost; walk warily; that thou mayest never have to retrace thy steps, shedding tears of blood.

III. SINS.

Through neglect of watching and prayer—or by reason of carelessness in the walk and conversation—it is quite possible to break that holy connection between ourselves and heaven which is the secret of deliverance, and the talisman of victory. There is always a Delilah ready to sheer off the locks of our strength, if we allow ourselves to sleep in her lap. And our strength may be

gone ere we know it. "He wist not that the Lord had departed from him." (Jud. xvi. 20.)

And when we put ourselves outside those sacred influences which are intended to deliver us from the power of evil, there is no alternative but that we should break out again into acts of sin. But there is a difference. They are not now the normal state of the soul. They are committed in opposition to the judgment and the conscience. They are the sins of a child for which it will be chastened, until it gets back into the old blessedness again. An old divine says: "A sheep and a sow may each fall into the same quagmire; but the sow will wallow in it, whilst the sheep will bleat piteously, until she is extricated and cleansed." Such is the difference between the ungodly and the

children of God. "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not;" that is, sin can never become his normal and habitual state. (1 John iii. 6.)

If ever this should be your unhappy lot, do not despair. The true test of Christian character does not consist in the inability to fall, but in the quick agony of repentance, and in the immediate restoration to the ways which had been left. Directly you are conscious of sin, turn at once to your compassionate Lord. Do not wait for the fever of passion to subside, or for the agony of your shame to die down; but, there and then, in the crowd or the street, lift up your heart, and ask Him to touch you with that finger before which uncleanness cannot abide: ask Him to wash you as He did the feet of His disciples, soiled by jealousy and strife for mas-

tery: ask Him to restore your soul to the place it occupied before you fell.

You may not be able to forgive yourself: but He will forgive you instantly; the stain will be at once extracted from the spirit's robes; the foulness will immediately flee from the blemished dress, and the forgiven one shall occupy again the place which for a moment had been vacated, the place in the heavenlies, side by side with its Redeemer. Oh, do not doubt the Saviour's willingness, or the Saviour's power, to forgive; or the efficacy of His blood to wash out each stain, as it may become manifest to the quickened conscience. Remember that His blood ever cleanseth from all sin, as the stream is ever flowing over the pebble, and as the tear-water is ever removing from the eye the motes that alight for a moment upon its surface.

It is not an easy world for any of us to traverse; it is no friend to grace: but it is possible to walk through it with clean and stainless robes. Sin may assail; but it will be as the waves that beat outside the goodly ship without finding admittance within its walls. And out of the pure and guileless heart shall spring all the loveliness of unselfish and helpful deeds, such as shall make this sad world happier, and dark hearts bright with the light of heaven.

O souls, weary and sin-sick, hand yourselves over to the tender mercies of the Good Physician, sure that He will undertake the most desperate case; and "give beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." (Isaiah lxi. 3.)

V.

The Will.

If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land.—Isaiah i. 19.
Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power.—Psalm cx. 3.

The one question which the Lord Jesus puts to every one of us, is that which He put, beside Bethesda's pool, to the sufferer who wistfully scanned His face for help: "*Wilt* thou be made whole?" The whole question turns on the attitude of the will. And it is for lack of realizing this, that many grope for years in darkness, who might otherwise walk in the light of life.

There are some who lay the chief stress on *Right Thinking.* They demand that the mind should have a clear

apprehension of the entire system of Christian truth. Every *i* must have its dot; every *t* must be strictly crossed. Each doctrine must receive its just place in the homage of the soul; and there must be no uncertainty in the pronunciation of the test-words of the Church. Then they argue that the character and experience will necessarily be right and blessed.

But, in practice, it is not so. It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of clear and accurate conceptions of truth. For what a man believes, that he is. At the same time, experience and observation prove beyond a doubt, that to think right is not enough to produce the fruits of the Spirit, or the blessedness of the Beatitudes. Many babes and sucklings in knowledge, whose notions of truth, through no fault

of their own, are hazy and partial, have entered the kingdom of heaven; the doors of which are closed against the wise and prudent who have no other claim for entrance than that they could pass muster in the strictest theological examination.

Others lay the chief stress on *Right Feeling*. Their test of rightness is joyousness. When they feel bright and happy, and their heart sings—and the azure blue, unflecked by cloud, canopies their path—they can sit in the heavenlies, and take their place among their peers. But when their glad emotions expend themselves as summer brooks; and the birds cease their strains; and the sky is overcast; they begin to question even their acceptance.

Surely feeling is too unsatisfactory for any of us to build upon it for peace

or power. Choose rather the shifting quicksands as a foundation for your house! We need something more reliable than an experience—which may be disturbed by an east wind, a cloudy day, or a fit of indigestion.

The true basis of religion is in *Right-willing.* And the reason for this is clear. We are not what we know. We are not what, in some special moment, we feel. We are what we will. We must bore down beneath the alluvial deposits of emotion, and the formation of the intellect, to the granite of the will! There, and there only, can we find a stable basis on which to build the structure of a blessed or useful life; because the will is the true expression of ourselves.

We admit this in daily life. We judge men, not by their intellectual ca-

pacity, not by the sensibilities that quiver beneath the passing breath, as the chords of an Aeolian lyre; not by exceptional and special deeds: but by their WILL—which may be called the resolve and intention of the soul, expressing itself in the decisions and actions of the life.

We do not blame the maniac who seeks to fire a cathedral: we simply confine him; his will was impaired. But we condemn the man who clearly meant to take his brother's life, though the deed itself was frustrated; his will was murder. And what we are with respect to one another, that we are also with respect to the Almighty God. His one complaint against us is not that we are dull and stupid; or that we do not feel more deeply; or that we are not swifter and stronger in our obedience—

but that we are *not willing*. "Ye *will not* come unto Me, that ye might have life." "If any man *will* come after Me." "I would . . . but ye *would not*." "If ye be *willing* and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land."

We need not now touch that mysterious province, hidden from mortal ken, where the human will is influenced by the Divine will. Doubtless, there are avenues by which the will of God reaches us, and touches us, of which we know nothing. And there are numberless methods by which God's will can impress itself on ours without violating the individuality of our willinghood. It is enough to know that He does work in us to *will* and to do of His own good pleasure. And it is certain that we cannot will aright except He prompt us. More than this we do not know, and

cannot say. We cannot but think, however, that no soul of man is born outside the range of the working of that loving will, which is peace on earth and good will to men. Alas, that it is so often resisted, even unto death!

Now let us turn to the practical bearing of this great truth—that our primary concern must ever be with our WILL. And we may sum up all we have to say in this one sentence: Put your will on God's side in everything, and leave to Him the responsibility of fulfilling in you, and through you, "all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in Him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess. i. 11, 21.)

ON THE THRESHOLD OF SALVATION.

How many there are around us like the impotent man of Bethesda! They are waiting for healing with eager desire. To get it they linger for years in the porches of Mercy's House. They wistfully see the gladness with which many go healed away. They hope that their turn will come at last.

But they are waiting for the wrong thing—for some mysterious troubling of the waters, rather than for the Healer. For a ceremony, and not for Christ. For an angel, and not for the Saviour. For the help of men to put them into salvation, or to their own lame efforts to shuffle into the pool of healing. They are always trying to get more correct conceptions of Christian-

ity, or to work themselves up into a condition of earnest feeling. Oh, if they could only *feel* more earnestness; or more adequate sorrow for sin; or more assurance of faith! They wait year after year for some angel to trouble the inner waters of their souls, and send a ripple of saving feeling across them. But the angel comes not. And they wait on till hope almost dies.

To such the Saviour comes. "*Wilt* thou be made whole?" He does not send the soul to college to study a creed, however Apostolic. He does not wait till it is fired with ardor or steeped in tears. He cuts right through all sorrowful confessions of deficient faith, utter worthlessness, inability to shed pure tears or think right thoughts. All this is with Him secondary. It must be considered: but presently, not first.

His one prime concern is the will. What *willest* thou? *Wilt* thou be saved? The question of salvation is a moral one; it hinges on the will.

And if the trembling soul can only look up to Him and say, "I would, but I cannot, feel; I would, but I cannot, believe; I would, but I cannot, repent"; then with great joy the Shepherd takes the lost sheep upon His shoulders. He says: "It is enough. I will work in thee all thou lackest. I will enter through the unlatched door of thine heart, laden with gifts. I will cleanse thee from all that grieves Me; and I will produce in thee all those holy things which thou seekest. They are the gifts of God to the recipient spirit through the agency of the Holy Spirit."

The initial step of salvation is our willingness to be saved. If that is as-

sured, tell Christ so. Look to Him to begin in thee His gracious work. And there is already commenced in thee a transformation, which starts with forgiveness, and ends in perfect conformity to the Son of God, in heaven's dateless glory.

IN OUR DAILY RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.

We give ourselves to God. Beneath the spell of some stirring appeal, or under the impression of written words, burning as carbon-points of the electric light, we resolve that we will live a more earnest, devoted, and whole-hearted existence. For some few days the momentum carries us on, and we feel happy and satisfied.

But after a while the blessing we have

received seems to expand itself. We are troubled by violent temptation. We lose all pleasure in private prayer. We can get nothing from our Bibles. For some deep and subtle reason, all our feelings are suddenly overcast. The heart, which was like a garden in summer, is as a barren moor, on which clouds brood. At such a time, if we are simply dependent on our feelings, we shall be ready to despair. If, like Peter, we regard the winds and waves, we, like him, must begin to sink; and we shall doubt the reality of the experience of God's truth and grace, which had heretofore given us a real lift heavenwards.

But if, my reader, you have ever learned the side of truth on which we are laying stress, you will have an unbroken confidence, and will feel a hand-

rail ready to your touch, though you cannot see your way through the murky night. At such a time look up to Christ and say: "I do not feel as I did; the joy of song and rapture, all is gone: but I am still Thine; I will to be only, always, all for Thee; I desire, in the very centre and heart of my being, to abide in Thee; I long for nothing so much as that Thou shouldest hasten Thy work of conquest within my soul, till every thought and feeling are brought captive to Thine obedience."

Even if you are conscious of having swerved for a moment from the path of perfect willinghood, by His grace put your WILL back again on the side of Christ, with tears and confessions, and ask Him to hold it, as a father holds the hand of his child on a slippery day. Forget your feelings. Entrench your-

self in your WILL. Ask Jesus to purify and sanctify it by His Spirit, so that it may be true to Himself. And believe that He is as eager as you are to still all the rebellion of the soul, and to make you what you wish and WILL to be, in your best and holiest hours. Your attitude towards Christ is determined, not by your feelings, but by your steadfast desire and "will."

IN SORROW AND TRIAL.

As sons we must endure the rod of chastening, which is "not joyous, but grievous." The way to the Kingdom lies through Gethsemane, with its deep shadows and its tears, and sweat of blood. All that can abide the fire must be made to pass through the fire.

And when our hour comes we cannot but suffer. We suffer as the little one is torn from our embrace, not realizing henceforth there will be always a child in our home. We suffer, as we have to leave cherished surroundings, and venture, as the eagle's nestlings, on the untried air. We suffer, as we have to be the means of inflicting pain upon those who love us; at the call of God taking the knife to slay their hopes. We suffer as we see some creeping paralysis slowly cut us off from the avenues of sense and life; shutting us up in a living cell. And let us not begrudge it all, since we learn obedience by the things we suffer; and discover the art of comforting others as we have been comforted.

Yet sometimes how hard it is to be submissive! And here it is that so

many mistake. They try to *feel* submissive and resigned. But they try in vain. They cannot bring themselves to feel, as they know they ought: and so they write hard things against themselves; and go out into the night in a self-imposed exile.

But it would be comparatively easy if they would only begin with the WILL. Will God's will. Tell Him that you are willing to be made willing to have His will. Bring your will to Him, as a piece of cold iron; and ask Him to renew it, and soften it, and mould it into perfect oneness with His own. Say to Him as Jesus did, "Father, Thy will, not mine, be done!" And when thoughts of rebellion or mistrust surge upwards in your soul, do not lose heart; trust God to deal with them. You cannot master them; but God can. Only be

sure that your will is true to Him as the needle is to the pole.

Oh, is not this a sight on which angels love to dwell?—when a human soul, amid its keenest agony, still is able to will the will of God; not swerving from it to the right or to the left; sure it must be good and wise, though all appearances are contrary; and daring to cry out from the midst of its agony, whilst all the nature beside is in revolt, "My God, I trust Thee; I choose Thy will."

If thus we yield our will to God, in our blindness, not because we feel it pleasant, but because we dare to believe in Him, we shall find that a wonderful change will steal over us, winning over our emotions and feelings to the self-same side; so that we shall come to accept the will of God with our feelings, as well as to will it with our will.

IN REGARD TO SIN.

When temptation besets us, it will sometimes so insinuate itself into our hearts, that we may be at a loss to distinguish the voice of the tempter from that of our own consciousness.

Bunyan tells us, that when the pilgrim was come over against the mouth of the pit, one of the wicked ones got behind him and whisperingly suggested many grievous blasphemies to him, which he verily thought had proceeded from his own mind. This put poor Christian more to it than anything that he had met with before.

We all of us know something of this. Such horrid thoughts! Such vain imaginations! Such vile suggestions! Noisome pestilence, indeed! But it is

not ours so long as the will remains steadfast in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Nor can we be held chargeable of sin so long as the spirit cleaves its way through all, tossing the suggestions aside as a ship the foam-crested waves.

Will to be free! *Will* to walk with God in stainless robes! *Will* to refuse the tempting bait! *Will* to deny flesh and to crucify self! *Will* because God is working in you to will. And you will find that if the WILL is present with you, the power to perform will also be forthcoming to your faith; and Jesus will make haste to achieve your complete deliverance. Lift up your heads and rejoice: your redemption draweth near.

Yes, and this will come to you—that your will shall become more and more one with the will of God; so much so,

that God will give you the keys of His kingdom, saying, "Ask what ye *will*, and it shall be done unto you." And in proportion as the will of man is brought into unison and harmony with the will of God, there will be growing peace and growing power. When the will of God is done in the heart, even as it is done in heaven, then the joy of heaven enters it to abide. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath the heart of man conceived, what God hath prepared for them that love Him." But these things are unfolded to the man who has given up his will to God; and who has received it back again, magnetized by His will; and who now lives in the citadel of a sanctified and devoted will. For this is the law of the kingdom of the Son of God: "If any man wills to do His will, he shall know."

Wilt thou be made whole? Christ asks that question of thee, my reader. Is not the Holy Spirit producing in thee a holy willingness? If so, tell thy Saviour so. He wills; *wilt* thou? If thou dost, then He undertakes to do all the rest; producing in thee health and life, wholeness and everlasting joy.

VI.

Guidance.

I will guide thee with Mine Eye.—Psalm xxxii. 8.

Many children of God are so deeply exercised on the matter of guidance that it may be helpful to give a few suggestions as to knowing the way in which our Father would have us walk, and the work He would have us do. The importance of the subject cannot be exaggerated; so much of our power and peace consist in knowing where God would have us be, and in being just there.

The manna only falls where the cloudy pillar broods; but it is certain to be found on the sands, which a few hours ago were glistening in the flashing

light of the heavenly fire, and are now shadowed by the fleecy canopy of cloud. If we are precisely where our heavenly Father would have us to be, we are perfectly sure that He will provide food and raiment, and everything beside. When He sends His servants to Cherith, He will make even the ravens to bring them food.

How much of our Christian work has been abortive, because we have persisted in initiating it for ourselves instead of ascertaining what God was doing, and where He required our presence. We dream bright dreams of success. We try and command it. We call to our aid all kinds of expedients, questionable or otherwise. And at last we turn back, disheartened and ashamed, like children who are torn and scratched by the brambles, and soiled by the quag-

mire. None of this had come about, if only we had been, from the first, under God's unerring guidance. He might test us, but He could not allow us to mistake.

Naturally, the child of God, longing to know his Father's will, turns to the sacred Book, and refreshes his confidence by noticing how in all ages God has guided those who dared to trust Him up to the very hilt; but who, at the time, must have been as perplexed as we are often now. We know how Abraham left kindred and country, and started, with no other guide than God, across the trackless desert, to a land which he knew not. We know how for forty years the Israelites were led through the peninsula of Sinai, with its labyrinths of red sandstone, and its waste of sand. We know how Joshua,

in entering the Land of Promise, was able to cope with the difficulties of an unknown region, and to overcome great and warlike nations, because he looked to the Captain of the Lord's Host, who ever leads to victory. We know how, in the early Church, the Apostles were enabled to thread their way through the most difficult questions, and to solve the most perplexing problems: laying down principles which guide the Church to the end of time; and this because it was revealed to them as to what they should do and say, by the Holy Spirit.

The promises for guidance are unmistakable.

Psa. xxxii. 8: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go." This is God's distinct assurance to those whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sins are covered,

and who are more quick to notice the least symptom of His will, than horse or mule to feel the bit.

Prov. iii. 6: "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct (or make plain) thy paths." A sure word, on which we may rest; if only we fulfil the previous conditions, of trusting with all our heart, and of not leaning to our own understanding.

Isa. lviii. 11: "The Lord shall guide thee continually." It is impossible to think that He could guide us at all, if He did not guide us always. For the greatest events of life, like the huge rocking-stones in the West of England, revolve on the smallest points. A pebble may alter the flow of a stream. The growth of a grain of mustard seed may determine the rainfall of a continent. Thus we are bidden look for a Guid-

ance which shall embrace the whole of life in all its myriad necessities.

John viii. 12: "I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." The reference here seems to be to the wilderness wanderings; and the Master promises to be to all faithful souls, in their pilgrimage to the City of God, all that the cloudy pillar was to the children of Israel on their march to the Land of Promise.

These are but specimens. The vault of Scripture is inlaid with thousands such, that glisten in their measure, as the stars which guide the wanderer across the deep. Well may the prophet sum up the heritage of the servants of the Lord, by saying of the Holy City, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children."

And yet it may seem to some tried and timid hearts, as if every one mentioned in the Word of God was helped, but they are left without help. They seem to have stood before perplexing problems, face to face with life's mysteries, eagerly longing to know what to do—but no angel has come to tell them, and no iron gate has opened to them in the prison house of circumstances.

Some lay the blame on their own stupidity. Their minds are blunt and dull. They cannot catch God's meaning, which would be clear to others. They are so nervous of doing wrong, that they cannot learn clearly what is right. "Who is blind, but My servant? or deaf, as My messenger that I sent? Who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the Lord's servant?" Yet, how do we treat our children? One

child is so bright-witted and so keen that a little hint is enough to indicate the way; another was born dull; it cannot take in your meaning quickly. Do you only let the clever one know what you want? Will you not take the other one upon your knee and make clear to it the directions which baffle it? Does not the distress of the tiny nursling, who longs to know that it may immediately obey, weave an almost stronger bond than that which binds you to the rest? O weary, perplexed, and stupid children, believe in the great love of God, and cast yourselves upon it, sure that He will come down to your ignorance, and suit Himself to your needs, and will take "the lambs in His arms, and carry them in His bosom, and *gently lead* those that are with young."

There are certain practical directions

which we must attend to, that we may be led into the mind of the Lord.

I. OUR MOTIVES MUST BE PURE.

"When thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light" (Luke xi. 34). You have been much in darkness lately; and perhaps this passage will point the reason. Your eye has not been single. There has been some obliquity of vision. A spiritual squint. And this has hindered you from discerning indications of God's will, which otherwise had been as clear as noonday.

We must be very careful in judging our motives: searching them as the detectives at the doors of the House of Commons search each stranger who enters. When, by the grace of God, we have been delivered from grosser forms

of sin, we are still liable to the subtle working of self, in our holiest and loveliest hours. It poisons our motive. It breathes decay on our fairest fruit-bearing. It whispers seductive flatteries into our pleased ears. It turns the spirit from its holy purpose, as the masses of iron on ocean steamers deflect the needle of the compass from the pole.

So long as there is some thought of personal advantage, some idea of acquiring the praise and commendation of men, some aim at self-aggrandizement, it will be simply impossible to find out God's purpose concerning us. The door must be resolutely shut against all this, if we would hear the still small voice. All cross-lights must be excluded, if we would see the Urim and Thummim stone brighten with God's "Yes," or darken with His "No."

Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the single eye, and to inspire in your heart one aim alone; that which animated our Lord, and enabled Him to cry, as He reviewed His life, "I have glorified Thee on the earth." Let this be the watchword of our lives, "Glory to God in the highest." Then our "whole body shall be full of light, having no part dark, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give light."

II. OUR WILL MUST BE SURRENDERED.

"My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me" (John v. 30). This was the secret, which Jesus not only practised, but taught. In one form or another He was constantly insisting on a surrendered will as the key

to perfect knowledge, "If any man will do His will, he shall know."

There is all the difference between a will which is extinguished and one which is surrendered. God does not demand that our wills should be withered up like the sinews of a fakir's unused arm. He only asks that they should say "Yes" to Him. Pliant to Him, as the willow twig to the practised hand.

Many a time, as the steamer has neared the quay, have I watched the little lad take his place beneath the poop, with eye and ear fixed on the captain, and waiting to shout each word he utters to the grimy engineers below; and often have I longed that my will should repeat as accurately and as promptly, the words and will of God, that all the lower nature might obey.

It is for lack of this subordination that we so often miss the guidance we seek. There is a secret controversy between our will and God's. And we shall never be right till we have let Him take, and break, and make. Oh, do seek for that! Never rest till that attitude be yours. Hand yourself over to Him to work in you to will and to do of His own good pleasure. We must be as plastic clay, ready to take any shape that the great Potter may choose: so shall we be able to detect His guidance.

III. WE MUST SEEK INFORMATION FOR OUR MIND.

This is certainly the next step. God has given us these wonderful faculties of brain power, and He will not ignore them. In the days of the Reformation,

He did not destroy the Roman Catholic churches or pulpits; He did better—He preached in them. And in grace He does not cancel the action of any of His marvelous bestowments; but He uses them for the communication of His purposes and thoughts.

It is of the greatest importance then that we should feed our minds with facts; with reliable information; with the results of human experience; and above all with the teachings of the Word of God. It is matter for the utmost admiration to notice how full the Bible is of biography and history: so that there is hardly a single crisis in our lives that may not be matched from these wondrous pages. There is no book like the Bible for casting a light on the dark landings of human life.

We have no need or right to run

hither and thither to ask our friends what we ought to do; but there is no harm in our taking pains to gather all reliable information, on which the flame of holy thought, and consecrated purpose, may feed, and grow strong. It is for us ultimately to decide as God shall teach us; but His voice may come to us through the voice of sanctified common sense, acting on the materials we have collected. Of course, at times God may bid us act against our reason; but these are very exceptional: and then our duty will be so clear that there can be no mistake. But for the most part, God will speak in the results of deliberate consideration, weighing and balancing the *pros* and *cons*.

When Peter was shut up in prison, and could not possibly extricate himself, an angel was sent to do for him what he

could not do for himself; but when they had passed through a street or two of the city, the angel left him to consider the matter for himself. Thus God treats us still. He will dictate a miraculous course by miraculous methods. But when the ordinary light of reason is adequate to the task, He will leave us to act as occasion may serve.

IV. WE MUST BE MUCH IN PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE.

The Psalms are full of earnest pleadings for clear direction: "Teach me Thy way, O Lord; lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies." It is the law of our Father's house, that His children shall ask for what they want. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask

of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not."

In a time of change and crisis, we need to be much in prayer, not only on our knees, but in that sweet form of inward prayer, in which the spirit is constantly offering itself up to God, asking to be shown His will; soliciting that it may be impressed upon its surface, as the heavenly bodies photograph themselves on prepared paper. Wrapt in prayer like this, the trustful believer may tread the deck of the ocean steamer night after night, sure that He who points the stars their courses will not fail to direct the soul which has no other aim than to do His will.

One good form of prayer at such a juncture is to ask that doors may be shut, that the way may be closed, and that all enterprises which are not ac-

cording to God's will may be arrested at their very beginning. Put the matter absolutely into God's hands from the outset, and He will not fail to shatter the project; and defeat the aim, which is not according to His holy will.

V. WE MUST WAIT THE GRADUAL UNFOLDING OF GOD'S PLAN IN PROVIDENCE.

God's impressions within, and His word without, are always corroborated by His providence around; and we should quietly wait until these three focus into one point.

Sometimes it looks as if we are bound to act. Every one says we must do something; and indeed things seem to have reached so desperate a pitch that we must. Behind are the Egyptians; right and left are inaccessible preci-

pices: before is the sea. It is not easy at such times to stand still and see the salvation of God; but we must. When Saul compelled himself, and offered sacrifice, because he thought that Samuel was too late in coming, he made one of the greatest mistakes of his life.

God may delay to come in the guise of His providence. There was delay ere Sennacherib's host lay like withered leaves around the Holy City. There was delay ere Jesus came walking on the sea in the early dawn, or hastened to raise Lazarus. There was delay ere the angel sped to Peter's side on the night before his expected martyrdom. He stays long enough to test patience of faith, but not a moment behind the extreme hour of need. "The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and shall not lie; though it

tarry, wait for it: because it will surely come; it will not tarry."

It is very remarkable how God guides us by circumstances. At one moment the way may seem utterly blocked; and then shortly afterward some trivial incident occurs, which might not seem much to others, but which to the keen eye of faith speaks volumes. Sometimes these signs are repeated in different ways, in answer to prayer. They are not hap-hazard results of chance; but the opening up of circumstances in the direction in which we should walk. And they begin to multiply as we advance towards our goal; just as lights do as we near a populous town, when darting through the land by night express.

Sometimes men sigh for an angel to come to point them their way: that sim-

ply indicates that as yet the time has not come for them to move. If you do not know what you ought to do, stand still until you do. And when the time comes for action, circumstances will sparkle, like glow-worms, along your path; and you will become so sure that you are right, when God's three witnesses concur, that you could not be surer though an angel-hand beckoned you on.

The circumstances of our daily life are to us an infallible indication of God's will when they concur with the inward promptings of the Spirit, and with the Word of God. So long as they are stationary, wait! When you must act, they will open; and a way will be made through oceans and rivers, wastes and rocks.

We often make a great mistake,

thinking that God is not guiding us at all, because we cannot see far ahead. But this is not His method. He only undertakes that *the steps* of a good man should be ordered by the Lord. Not next year; but to-morrow. Not the next mile; but the next yard. Not the whole pattern; but the next stitch in the canvas. If you expect more than this you will be disappointed, and get back into the dark. But this will secure for you leading in the right way; as you will acknowledge when you review it from the hill-tops of glory.

We cannot ponder too deeply the lessons of the cloud given in the exquisite picture-lesson on Guidance in Numbers ix. 15-23. Let us look high enough for guidance. Let us encourage our soul to wait only upon God, till it is given. Let us cultivate that meekness which He

will guide in judgment. Let us seek to be of quick understanding, that we may be apt to see the least sign of His will. Let us stand with girded loins and lighted lamps, that we may be prompt to obey. Blessed are those servants! They shall be led by a right way to the golden city of the saints.

VII.

The Fulness of the Spirit.

Be filled with the Spirit.—Ephesians v. 18.

Nothing can compensate the Church, or the individual Christian, for the lack of the Holy Spirit. What the full stream is to the mill-wheel, that is the Holy Spirit to the Church. What the principle of life is to the body, that is the Holy Spirit to the individual. We shall stand powerless and abashed in the presence of our difficulties and our foes, until we learn what He can be, as a mighty tide of love and power in the hearts of His saints.

Amongst the readers of these lines

there may be many who are suffering from different forms of spiritual weakness, all of which are directly attributable to the lack of the Holy Spirit. Not that they are completely destitute of Him; for if they were, they would not be Christians at all; but that, being within them, He is present only as an attenuated thread, a silver streak, a shallow brook. Why should we be content with this? The Pentecostal fulness, the enduement of power, the baptism of fire, are all within our reach. Let us be inspired with a holy ambition to get all that our God is willing and eager to bestow.

Do you lack *assurance?* Sometimes you do not, for you feel happy and content. But, anon, these happy hours are fled, and your rest is broken, as the surface of the mountain tarn is overcast

and ruffled by the gathering storm. You need a basis of settled peace; and it is only to be found—first, in a clear apprehension of what Jesus has done for you; secondly, in the sealing of the Holy Spirit. It is His sacred office to witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. He is the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father!

Do you lack *victory over sin?* This is not to be wondered at, if you neglect the Holy Spirit. He is the blessed antidote to the risings and dominion of the flesh. He lusts against the flesh, so that we may not fulfil its lusts. When He fills the heart in His glorious fulness, the suggestions of temptation are instantly quenched, as sparks in the ocean wave. Sin can no more stand against the presence of the Holy Ghost than

darkness can resist the gentle, all-pervasive beams of morning light.

If, however, He is grieved, or resisted, or quenched, so that His power and presence are restrained, there is no deliverance for the spirit—however bitter its remorse, or eager its resort to fastings, mortifications, and regrets. The law of the Spirit of Life, which is in Christ Jesus, can alone make us free from the law of sin and death. But it can, and it will—if only we yield ourselves to its operation.

Do you lack the *fruits of holiness?* Some whom we know are so evidently filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are to the praise of God, that we are instinctively drawn to them. Their faces are bright with the presence of the Lord, though they drink of the cup of His sorrows. Their spirit is tender;

their disposition sweet and unselfish; and their childlike humility flings the halo of indescribable beauty over their whole behavior.

We lack these graces. There is little in us to attract men to Christ; much to repel. Our boughs are naked and bare as if locusts had stripped them. And the reason is evident. We have not let the Holy Spirit have His way with our inner life. Had the sap of His presence been mightily within us, we should have been laden with luscious fruitage; it would have been impossible to be otherwise.

Do you lack *power for service?* You have no burning thirst for the salvation of others. You are not on fire for souls. You have never been in agony over the alienation of men from God. And when you speak, there is no power in

what you say. The devils laugh at your attempts to exorcise them. The sleeper turns for a moment uneasily; but soon falls into profounder slumber than ever. The home, the class, the congregation, yield no results. No hand-picked fruit fills your basket. No finny shoal breaks your nets. No recruits accept your call to arms. And you cannot expect it to be otherwise till you obtain the power which our Lord promised when He said, "Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you." It was when the early Christians were filled with the Holy Ghost, that they spake the word of God with boldness; and gave witness with great power to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

These and many other deficiencies would be met, if only we were filled with the Holy Spirit. There would be

a joy, a power, a consciousness of the presence of the Lord Jesus, an habitual rest in the will of God, which would be a joyful discovery to us; if only we refused to be satisfied with anything less than the full indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Entire consecration to the service of the Lord Jesus is a great step in advance of the experience of most Christians; but even that is not enough. It is often largely *negative;* but we require something strongly *positive,* to meet the necessities of our hearts and of our times. And this is to be sought in our entire possession by that mighty Spirit, whose advent at Pentecost has dated a new era for the Church and the world.

Of course He was always in the world. It was the Holy Spirit of Pente-

cost who brooded over chaos; and spoke in prophets and holy men; and nerved the heroes and saints of Old Testament time. The day of Pentecost did not introduce a new Spirit into the world; but inaugurated an era in which the weakest and meanest of the saints might possess Him in the same measure as they did who lived upon its farther side. Before that momentous day His fulness was the prerogative of only the few, the *elite,* the Elijahs, and Isaiahs, and Daniels; but since that day He has been shed forth in all His plentitude on the many—on women and children; on obscure thinkers and hidden workers; on handmaids and servants; on all and any who were prepared to fulfil the conditions, and to abide by the results. Why not on us?

We are willing to admit that the spe-

cial gifts of the Holy Ghost belong to the Apostolic age. Given for a specific purpose, they are now withdrawn; though it is a serious question whether they might not have been continued, if only the Church had been more faithful to her sacred trust.

But the special gifts of the Holy Ghost are altogether apart from His blessed fulness. That is not the exclusive right of any age. Confined to no limited area or epoch in the history of the Church, it pours its tides of light and power around us, as the Nile in flood; nor is there a single plot of garden-ground, however remote, into which it will not come, to fertilize and enrich, if only the channel of communication be kept cleansed and open.

"Be filled with the Spirit" is an injunction as wide-reaching in its de-

mands as "Husbands, love your wives," which is found on the same page. It is a positive command, which we must obey at our peril; and all God's commands are enablings. In other words, He is prepared to make us what He tells us to become. Moreover, on the day of Pentecost, in words which are the charta of our right to the fulness of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Peter told the listening crowds that the fulness which had suddenly come on them from the ascended Lord—and which was a direct fulfilment of ancient prophecy—was not for them only, or for their children; but for as many as were afar off, even for them whom the Lord God should call. Are you one of His called ones? Then rejoice! because that fulness is for you. Be not faithless, but believing! Lay claim at once to the covenanted por-

tion; and thank God for having cast your lot in an age of such marvelous possibilities.

I. EXCITE HOLY DESIRE BY CONSIDERING WHAT THE FULNESS OF THE SPIRIT MEANS.

We cannot expect to have it, if we are quite content to live without it. Our Father is not likely to entrust this priceless gift to those who are indifferent to its possession. Where the flame of desire burns low, there can be no intelligent expectation that the Holy Spirit's fulness shall be realized.

And it is not enough to have a fitful and inconstant desire, which flames up to-day, but will remain dormant for months and years. There must be a

steady purpose, able to stand the test of waiting, if need be, for ten days; and to bear the rebuff of silence or apparent denial.

And yet the flame of desire needs fuel. We must muse before that fire can burn. And it becomes us, therefore, to stir up the gift that is within us, by a quiet consideration of all that is meant by becoming Spirit-filled.

There is no book which will so move us in this direction as the Acts of the Apostles. It is perfectly marvelous to see what this fulness did for those who first received it. Cowards became brave. Obtuse intellects, which had stumbled at the simplest truths, suddenly awoke to apprehend the Master's scheme. Such power attended their words that crowds became congregations; Christ's murderers became His

worshippers and friends; councils of clever men were not able to withstand the simple eloquence of indisputable facts; towns and countries were shaken, and yielded converts by the thousand to the unlearned but fervid preachers of the cross.

And all this was simply attributable to the power which had become the common property of the whole Church. And there is not a fragment of reason why it should not do so much for us. And, as we contrast that triumphant success to our halting progress, shall not we be filled with uncontrollable longings that He should work similar results by us?

We may still further secure the same results by studying the biography of saintly men belonging to recent centuries. Happy the man within reach of a library, the shelves of which are well

lined with books of holy biography. He will never, never be in want of additional stimulus as he reads the story of McCheyne and W. C. Burns, of Brainard and Martyn, of Jonathan Edwards and D. L. Moody. He will not envy or repine; but he will constantly lift eye and heart to Heaven, asking that as much may be done through himself.

And moreover, the promises of the Scripture are enough to incite us to the uttermost. That rivers of water should flow from us; that we should never need to be anxious about our words, because they would be given; that we should be taught all things, and led into the whole circle of truth; that we should know Christ, and be changed into His image; that we should have power—all this is so fascinating, that it is impossible not to glow with a holy desire to be charged

with the Holy Spirit, as a jar with electricity. And, if needs be, we shall be prepared to bear the test of long waiting, as the faithful few did in the upper room.

II. SEEK THIS BLESSED FULNESS FROM THE RIGHT MOTIVE.

God will not find water for us to use for turning our own water-wheels. He will do nothing to minister to our pride. He will not give us the Holy Spirit to enable us to gain celebrity; or to procure a name; or to live an easy, self-contented life.

If we seek the Holy Spirit merely for our happiness, or comfort, or liberty of soul, it will be exceedingly unlikely that He will be given. His one passion is—the glory of the Lord Jesus; and He

can only make His abode with those who are willing to be at one with Him in this. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" But if you are actuated simply by the desire that the Lord Jesus may be magnified in you, whether by life or death; if you long, above all, that men should turn away from you to Him, as they did from John the Baptist —then rejoice, because you are near blessing beyond words to describe. If your motives fall below this standard, trust in Him to enlighten and purify them, and offer Him a free entrance within. It will not then be long ere there shall be a gracious response; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, and He shall sit as a refiner of silver, that the sons of Levi may offer an offering in righteousness.

III. CONSIDER THAT HOLY SCRIPTURE IS HIS SPECIAL ORGAN.

A subtle danger besets the teaching of this most helpful doctrine, and one that we need to guard against. Some earnest people have magnified the inner light and leading of the Holy Spirit to the neglect of the Word which He gave, and through which He still works on human hearts. This is a great mistake, and the prolific parent of all kinds of evil. For directly we put aside the Word of God, we lay ourselves open to the solicitation of the many voices that speak within our hearts; and we have no test, no criterion of truth, no standard of appeal. How can we know the Spirit of God, in some of the more intricate cases which are brought into the court of con-

science, unless our judgment is deeply imbued with the Word of God?

We must not be content with the Spirit without the Word; or with the Word without the Spirit. Our life must travel along these two, as the locomotive along the parallel metals. The Word is the chosen organ of the Spirit; and it is only by our devout contact with it that we shall be enabled to detect His voice. It is by the Word that the Spirit will enter our hearts, as the heat of the sun passes into our chambers through the beams of light that enter the open casement.

We need a widespread revival of Bible study. These mines of Scripture, lying beneath the surface, call loudly for investigation and discovery: and those who shall obey the appeal, and set themselves to the devout and laborious study

of the inner meaning of the Word, shall be soon aware that they have received the filling that they seek.

IV. BE PREPARED TO LET THE HOLY GHOST DO AS HE WILL WITH YOU.

The Holy Ghost is in us, and by this means Christ is in us; for He dwells in us by the Spirit, as the sun dwells in the world by means of the atmosphere vibrating with waves of light. But we must perpetually yield to Him, as water to the containing vessel. This is not easy; indeed it can only be accomplished by incessant self-judgment, and the perpetual mortification of our own self-life.

What is our position before God in this respect? We have chosen Jesus as

our substitute; but have we also chosen Him, by the Holy Spirit, as our Life? Can we say, like the Apostle: "Not I, but Christ liveth in me?" If so, we must be prepared for all that it involves. We must be willing for the principle of the new life to grow at the expense of the self-life. We must consent for the one to increase, whilst the other decreases, through processes which are painful enough to the flesh. Nay, we must ourselves be ever on the alert, hastening the processes of judgment, condemnation, and crucifixion. We must keep true in our allegiance to the least behest of the Holy Spirit, though it cost tears of blood.

The perpetual filling of the Holy Spirit is only possible to those who obey Him; and who obey Him in all things. There is nothing trivial in this life. By

the neglect of slight commands, a soul may speedily get out of the sunlit circle, and lose the gracious plentitude of Spirit-power. A look, a word, a refusal, may suffice to grieve Him in ourselves, and to quench Him in others. Count the cost; yet do not shrink back afraid of what He may demand. He is the Spirit of love; and He loves us too well to cause grief, unless there is a reason, which we should approve, if we knew as much as He.

V. RECEIVE HIM BY FAITH.

"As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." Faith is the one law of the Divine household. And as once you obtained forgiveness and salvation by faith, so now claim and receive the Holy Spirit's fulness.

Fulfil the conditions already named; wait quietly but definitely before God in prayer, for He gives His Holy Spirit *to them that ask Him:* then reverently appropriate this glorious gift; and rise from your knees, and go on your way, reckoning that God has kept His word, and that you are filled with the Spirit. Trust Him day by day to fill you and keep you filled. According to your faith, so shall it be done to you.

There may not be, at first, the sound of rushing wind, or the coronet of fire, or the sensible feeling of His presence. Do not look for these, any more than the young convert should look to feeling as an evidence of acceptance. But believe, in spite of feeling, that you are filled. Say over and over, "I thank Thee, O my God, that Thou hast kept Thy word with me. I opened my

mouth, and Thou hast filled it; though, as yet, I am not aware of any special change." And the feeling will sooner or later break in upon your consciousness, and you will rejoice with exceeding great joy; and all the fruits of the Spirit will begin to show themselves.

There is, of course, more in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit than is at all realized by the writer of these feeble lines. The fiery baptism of the Holy Spirit may be something far beyond. Let us not then be content to miss anything possible to redeemed men; but leaving the things that are behind, let us press on to those before, striving to apprehend all for which we have been apprehended by Christ Jesus. And if we persevere, we shall realize possibilities in our lives that shall recall the days of the Apostles, and enable us to

understand what Jesus meant when He spoke of those greater works which should be wrought by them that should believe in Him after He had gone to His Father.

VIII.

Our Work for Christ.

To every man his work.—Mark xiii. 34.

The Christian life is sure to manifest itself in holy activity; as certainly as the life of a vegetable or plant manifests itself in flower and fruit. It is perfectly true to speak of such activities as *work*—"to every man his work." But to describe them as *fruit* brings out another shade of meaning, and indicates our entire dependence for all successful work on our living connection with our glorious Lord.

The Lord Jesus is Himself the great Worker. He came to finish the work which His Father gave Him to do. St. Mark fitly describes Him during His

earthly career as the swift and incessant worker, whose days were crowded with incident from early dawn far on into the night. "I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day."

It is a great mistake to suppose that His work has ceased. The Gospels tell us only of what He *began* to do and teach. But the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, which might be better called the Book of the Acts of the living and ascended Lord, takes up the wondrous story, and tells us of what He continued to do and teach, after He had passed through the heavens to the right hand of God. He is still the great Worker throughout all the ages, both in the universe, and in the Church. And the sacred record already mentioned closes abruptly with great fitness; because the wondrous story of the Acts of the Lord

did not finish when Paul in his hired house, for two whole years, had preached unhindered the things concerning the Kingdom of God, in the metropolis of the world-kingdom. It runs on throughout the centuries, and is still being written by angel fingers in the chronicles of eternity.

But is it not true that the ascended Lord requires organs and instruments for the expression and working out of His mighty thoughts and purposes? He is the Head of the body, the Church; and He needs members, as the medium through which He may convey His purposes of grace and power towards the world. As of old He passed the blessings that throbbed in His heart through the hands, and lips, and presence of His mortal body; so now He must employ His own beloved ones to be His

hands, His lips, His feet, His body—by which men may receive healing virtue. St. Paul was therefore consistent with the deepest truth, when "he declared particularly what things God *had wrought* among the Gentiles by his ministry." And we shall work effectively when we understand that we are not required to originate or execute work *for* Christ, so much as to work out His schemes, in His own strength.

Who amongst the readers of these lines does not long to be as useful as possible in this brief life; to fulfil all the possibilities of usefulness; and to apprehend that for which Christ has apprehended him? But this can never be, until all the powers of nature, which Christ has redeemed, are placed absolutely at His disposal, with this prayer, "Do with me, in me, to me, by me, as

Thou wilt; only make as much of me as can be made on this side of the gates of pearl. Work out Thine own ideal. Fulfil in me all the good pleasure of Thy will. Perfect that which concerneth me."

The maker of the organ can best develop the sweet and mighty tones which sleep within its compass. The inventor of an ingenious machine can best unfold its varied appliances. And surely it stands to reason that He who knows what is in us can best call forth our faculties, and use them, and manipulate them for His glory, and to our joy. Oh, what could not the Lord Jesus do by us, if only we were wholly yielded to Him!

Let us note a few hints which may be of assistance to Christian workers.

I. WORK FROM PURE MOTIVES.

Legends tell that when the Emperor Justinian had built the Byzantine Church with a view to his own aggrandizement and glory, on the day of dedication he looked in vain for his own name on the memorial stone. Angel hands had obliterated it, and substituted for it that of the widow, Euphrasia—whose only merit was, that out of pure devotion she had strewn a little straw in front of the beasts that drew the heavily-laden trucks of marble from the quarry to the sacred pile. His motive was so ignoble that heaven ignored his gift; hers was so pure and lovely that she received credit for the whole.

Alas! how much of our work vanishes, without note in heaven, because it springs from no motive that can pass

muster there. Earth rings with its fame, and therein we find our only and sufficient recompense; but the tidings never travel further, whilst other deeds, which arrest no notice here, stir all heaven with interest, because of the mighty motives that gave them birth.

With what shame do many of us review the ignoble and worthless motives by which we have been prompted. To gain a livelihood; to win a name; to excite applause; to outvie some neighbor; to win a victory; to accomplish a difficult and almost impossible task; these have inspired us in many deeds of Christian service, which have received the commendation of those who judge by appearance, and not by heart. How could our God be pleased with us, or accept our service! Our most splendid deeds have been irreparably spoilt by

the meanness of the motives that prompted them.

Our motives must be pure. The root will affect all the fruit. The stream cannot rise higher than its source. We must get rid of the constant thought of self. We must become oblivious to the praise or blame of man. We must let the sun of Divine love burn out the fires of selfish ambition and personal aims. We must bring our weak and weary hearts to the Heart-physician, asking Him to cleanse them by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit, disentwining the clinging evil of self, and filling us with His own sweet, ingenuous, and perfect love. May our hearts burn with the pure flame of devotion that trembles in the hearts of seraphs! This our cry in life and death: "Glory to God in the Highest!"

II. WORK ON GOD'S PLAN.

One of the most suggestive texts in the Bible, far-reaching in its many applications, is that in which God says to Moses, "See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee in the Mount." Not a stake, or a curtain, or an atom of fragrant spice was left to the genius of the artificer, or the fancy of the lawgiver. All was unfolded to Moses in elaborate detail; and all he had to do was to produce that plan in careful and exact obedience, until at last it stood complete before the wondering host of Israel. And God provided the material in abundance, out of which the plan was to be elaborated. If we will execute His plans, we need have no anxiety about the stuff; He will make Himself responsible for that.

Does not this touch the secret of much of our failure? We reason thus: "This seems a feasible thing; it promises well: other men are doing it; success seems within grasp, and would be very sweet: I shall certainly go in for it." We do not stay to ask whether it is one of those good works which God has before prepared for us to walk in. We do not seek to know, by prayer and waiting, whether it is in God's plan for us. We do not humbly wait to be taught if God wants our help in this special direction. And it is only when we have plunged deeply into our course, and have met with all manner of discouragement, that we begin to question whether we should have adopted it at all. Then we run to ask God to extricate us; to help us out; and to forgive us for having built, and launched, and

chartered our ships, without asking Him if we were acting in accordance with His will.

The fact is, *we* start an enterprise, and presently ask God to help us; instead of first asking what He was doing, and whether we could help Him.

Do not think that this mode of life will lead to listless dreaming. None are so energetic, so swift, so mighty in their holy activities as those who know that they are on God's lines; doing their little bit in the mighty scheme of tesselated pavement; sure that His accomplished plan will amply justify them; and casting all responsibilities on His perfect wisdom.

Do not run hither and thither, asking for work. How can any one tell you what the Master wants you to do? We can but guess at the best. Go straight

to the Lord Jesus for yourselves. Tell Him you cannot bear to be shut out of His glorious fellowship. Entreat Him to indicate your place. And never rest content until, like Peter, you turn from the vision to the task; and, in the knock of the far-travelled messengers, you are summoned to the work which needs you.

III. WORK AS THOSE FRESHLY CLEANSED.

The priests must wash in the laver before they perform the service of the Sanctuary. They must be clean who bear the vessels of the Lord. A man must purge himself from iniquity, if he shall be "a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work." (2 Tim. ii. 21.)

If, in haste, we would give a draught of refreshing water to a traveller, we take from our shelf the first vessel which is *clean*. We pass over the elegant and richly-chased cup for the earthenware mug, if the latter has a cleanliness which the former lacks. And our Lord Jesus will gladly use us for His service, though we be of but common ware, if only we are clean and ready for use.

In our hospitals, the instruments used in operations are constantly kept in carbolic acid, that they may not carry the slightest contagion to the open wound; and we cannot touch the open and festering wounds which sin has caused without injury to ourselves and others, unless we are ever in the flow of the blood and water of which St. John speaks.

IV. WORK IN GOD'S STRENGTH.

No man is sent to the warfare on his own charges; and yet many Christians argue as if that were one of heaven's standing orders. None, however, are ever called to a work which God does not know is within the limits of the strength which He has given, or which He is ready to give, to the opened, upturned heart. He does not want our strength—it is often a hindrance to Him; because we are so apt to rely on it, to the exclusion of Himself. He wants our weakness, our infirmities, our nothingness—"that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." So far from your consciousness of powerlessness being a barrier to your efficient work, it will be one of the strongest elements in your success—if

only you are driven to lay hold on His strength, and be at peace. "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

When asking Christians to undertake certain branches of Christian work, one is so often met with the excuse, "I cannot do it; I am not fitted for it. I have no power to speak." Such have much need to get back to the desert and learn the significant lesson of the rod which Moses held in his hand. He was questioning his sufficiency to take up the work which was being thrust upon him; but he learned that if only a rod is cast down before God, it becomes endowed with new powers; it can be and do what would be impossible by nature: and

through the power of God it may become invested with such might as to carve a way through the waves; roll back the hosts of Amalek; and bring water from the flinty rock. Why should not we be as that rod in the hands of Christ? Without Him we cannot be other than broken reeds; but in and with Him we become pillars in the temple from which we shall go no more out. "I can do all things in Him which strengtheneth me."

And there is no way so good of getting God's strength as being diligent students of His precious Word. This is the medium of conveying strength to our inmost souls; as the grain conveys the strength of the earth to the nutriment of our natural life. Read your Bibles, Christian workers, if you would be strong. And it also stands to reason

that the Holy Ghost is much more likely to use marvelously the man whose mind is steeped and saturated with the thoughts and phraseology of Scripture, which has been indited by Him as the medium of eternal truths to human hearts.

V. WORK IN BELIEVING EXPECTANCY.

How often and how truly it has been said that God never uses a discouraged man. No great measure of success will ever come to him who does not believe in it, and expect it. In this, as in all other spiritual work, we are governed by one unchanging law: According to your faith be it done unto you. "Only be thou strong and very courageous."

And why should we not go forth with the elastic tread of those who know that

they shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing with them their sheaves? We go on God's errands; we are provided with His seed, we are directed by His unerring wisdom to our plot in the field; we are sure of His co-operation in giving sun and shower, dew and rain. We may have to wait, as all true husbandmen must; but there can be no doubt as to the ultimate issue.

Oh, what a glorious work is ours! To give effect to the yearnings of Divine love; to be the organs and instruments of the redemptive purpose of God; to be associated with Christ in the salvation of the lost; to pluck men as brands from the burning, and to hold them aloft as torches for the progress of the King; to hasten the glad day of His second coming; to be His heralds and ambassadors—these were enough to

lure an archangel from his seat. Well is it to have been summoned to do it; and a thousand times better to know that it is to be the employment of eternal ages, of which it is written, "His servants shall serve Him."

IX.

Concluding Words.

Keep yourselves in the love of God.—Jude 21.

The longer we live, the less we care to speak of our love to God, and the more we dwell on God's love to us. As we climb the hill of Christian experience, we see the ever-growing horizon of the ocean of Divine tenderness; and we become ashamed even to mention the pool of our love that lies far away in the vale beneath. Besides, we come to see that all true love to God is only a reflected gleam of His great love towards us. "We love Him because He first loved us."

There is no sweeter atmosphere in which to live than the perpetual con-

sciousness that God loves us. Like the steady heat of the hot-house producing flowers and fruits amid the frosts of December: so, in this icy world, the genial glow of the love of God experienced perennially by the believer will produce those results which are exotics to this world, though they are native to the soil of the New Jerusalem.

When the Apostle bids us keep ourselves in the love of God, he surely does not mean that we need to exert ourselves to prevent the cessation of God's love toward us. The love of God is without variableness, or shadow of turning. Having loved His own which are in the world, He loves them unto the end. We may rest satisfied that nothing can separate us from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord. If we are faithless, He remain-

eth faithful. If we wander away into backsliding and coldness, He continues immutably the same. If we, like Peter, deny Him, yet He still looks on us with yearning affection, enough to break our hearts. Oh, clasp this blessed thought to your inner consciousness!—that the love of God is more tenacious than a mother's—"she may forget"—and more lasting than hills or mountains, which "may depart."

But the love of God to us is one thing; and our appreciation and enjoyment of that love is quite another. The one is unalterably the same; while the other is fitful and intermittent. Sometimes we are very sensible of the warm beam of God's love shining blessedly into our souls; at other times we have no such joyous consciousness of His love: but we must remember that God's

love to us does not in any way depend on our consciousness of it. It is not most, because we happen to feel it most; or least, because we have almost ceased to feel it at all. The one is no gauge of the amount of the other. God's love to us is ever constant, however much our appreciation of it may vary. When the sunlight beams seem to touch only a rim of the moon's surface, we do not argue that the sun is growing cold and dark. When a child wanders far afield from home and mother, we do not suppose that the love has necessarily died out in that mother's heart.

Nevertheless, though our consciousness of God's love does not determine its amount or constancy, yet it is very delightful and helpful to realize it always. Thus we become most sensitive to sin. Thus we acquire purity of heart. Thus

we become strong and fearless. Thus, too, we become magnetic, attracting others to Him who has made us what we are.

This then is the question with which we opened, and with which we close, these thoughts on Christian Living—"May we not live in the hourly consciousness of the love of God toward us?"

Is not this what Jesus meant when He said, "I have kept My Father's commandments, and *abide* in His love?" Is not this what He meant, when He bade us keep His commandments and abide in His own love? And what else did Jude mean by bidding his fellow-Christians to keep themselves "in the love of God?"

We may not always or exclusively be dwelling on it; but continually looking

up from our work, and finding that that benignant face is still smiling on us; and that that over-arching heaven of love is still above and around; not able to speak much of our love to God, but always able to speak of His love to us —like a child who plays about the house without questioning for a moment, because it feels instinctively that all around it is shining the love of the mother.

There are three or four brief hints that may be of service:—

I. Take time to consider God's love to you. God loves the world, because He loves each unit in the great sum of human life. We see the parterres of spring; to Him each flower is distinct. To us the sparrows are so similar that we cannot distinguish one from the rest; but He marks each sparrow's fall.

We stand in wonder beneath the arch of the starry sky, and are bewildered by the multitudinousness of the star-dust. He calls each atom by its separate name. And so when we think of God's love to us, we must not think He loves us as part of the race; but with a special individualizing love, which singles us out of the crowd, as a father loves each child with a love in which no other can share.

"Thou art as much His care, as if beside
Nor man, nor angel lived in heaven and earth."

This belief in God's personal love is very helpful. It prevents us from feeling lost in a crowd. But it is not natural or easy at first. We must be patient, and take time to allow the thought to possess us, in its mighty grasp. We

must get alone, and shut the door upon the busy world, and set ourselves to comprehend the meaning of those three small words, *God loves me.* We must learn that it is of the very nature of an Infinite Being to be as much in one place as though He were in no other place; and to love one lonely heart as if there were none other to share His love in all the wide universe. In the morning, before you enter on the calls of daily duty, take time—five minutes—quietly to realize that you are the object of the deep personal love of the Infinite God.

II. Accept all the incidents of the day as coming from His love. I do not see how we can make distinctions between God's ordaining and His permissive providence, any more than we can between His special and general

providence. All life, and its many incidents; what comes to us directly from His hand, equally with what is permitted to happen to us through the means of others—must be traced back to Himself as the ultimate final cause. Our Lord was delivered by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God; though this did not lessen the wickedness of the hands by which He was crucified and slain. Here is the mystery of the ages; but let not the mystery rob us of the undoubted truth, that God is behind all events.

And God is love. All events, therefore, must be consistent with His love. And we must recognize this, if we would keep ourselves in its glad and constant enjoyment. When any bright thing befalls you; when any one says anything kind of you; when an unex-

pected gift falls at your feet; when a new friendship enters your life; when the sun shines brightly on your path—look up, and know that all lovely and helpful things are the children of the love of God. Do not be so occupied with the gift, or the channel through which it comes, as to ignore the Giver Himself.

And when unkind things are said or done; when robber bands steal your goods, as Job's; when friends disappoint you, and Shimeis curse—then look up, and be sure that all is permitted by a love that cares for you none the less tenderly when it withholds its help. "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus: when He heard, *therefore,* that he was sick, He abode two days still in the same place where He was."

Thus every event that comes to you will link you, by a golden clasp, with the love of God.

III. Be channels of God's love to others. In the spring, the vine-root, bursting with life-power, longs for branches through which it may pour its tides of life forth to refresh thirsty souls; and surely the love of God is ever seeking for kindred hearts, who shall be channels of communication with the world. The world, too, needs love. There is nothing which can slake its thirst, but the love of God. It will ever thirst again till it drinks of that stream.

Why should not you, my reader, be one of the channels through which God's love may pour itself out to refresh him that is weary? If you are willing, you will find yourself beginning to care for

men as never before; and there will be a new power of affection opened within you which shall betray its Divine origin.

And what, think you, shall be the effect of this upon yourself, except to teach you the meaning of God's love to *you?* For the water which flows along a channel can refresh the flowerets that grow upon its banks. Those that live in love to others know the love of God to themselves; and to keep other men in our love is to keep ourselves in the love of God. Forsake wrath, jealousy, and envy, in the power of God's grace, and learn the new, glad lesson of love.

IV. Associate with those who love God. No one of us can know the fulness of God's love in the loneliness of our own communings. We need to associate *with all saints* to learn its height and depth, and length and breadth. It

is a mistake to isolate ourselves from communion with Christians, or from corporate Church-life; and it is my earnest advice to all young Christians, as to all secret disciples, to find some happy centre of Christian fellowship, and join it.

We see the love of God from different angles. It shines on us with different hues. And no one can fully appreciate it, and its full extent, who has not spoken with other Christians about it, and tried to catch some new beauty in their conceptions. Talk much of the love of God to those around you. Hear them, and ask them questions. So shall your heart burn within you, and Jesus will make Himself known in some deeper, sweeter guise. Christian converse is a great help towards the abiding realization of the love of God.

V. Live in obedience to every known command. "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love." This is the secret—to search the Word to see if you are keeping all His commands; to seek and keep His laws; to put the government upon His shoulders; to do His will, at whatever cost to self-will; to obey, not to win aught from His hand, but just to please Him; to ask forgiveness and restoration if you have erred or gone astray. Here is the essential condition of walking in the light of His love.

Who has not been conscious of a sweet manifestation of love, when some difficult duty has been done for His dear sake alone? As when Jesus was baptized, the heavens were opened, and the

voice of God declared Him to be His beloved Son.

Let us "walk in the light, as He is in the light:" so shall we be conscious not of light only, but of love.

There is no need for us to live in a cold and arctic zone, if only we fulfil the conditions here set down. We may not always be equally buoyant, or equally exuberant; or equally responsive; but we shall never lose the bright glad consciousness that we are loved by the Love that spared not the only-begotten Son.

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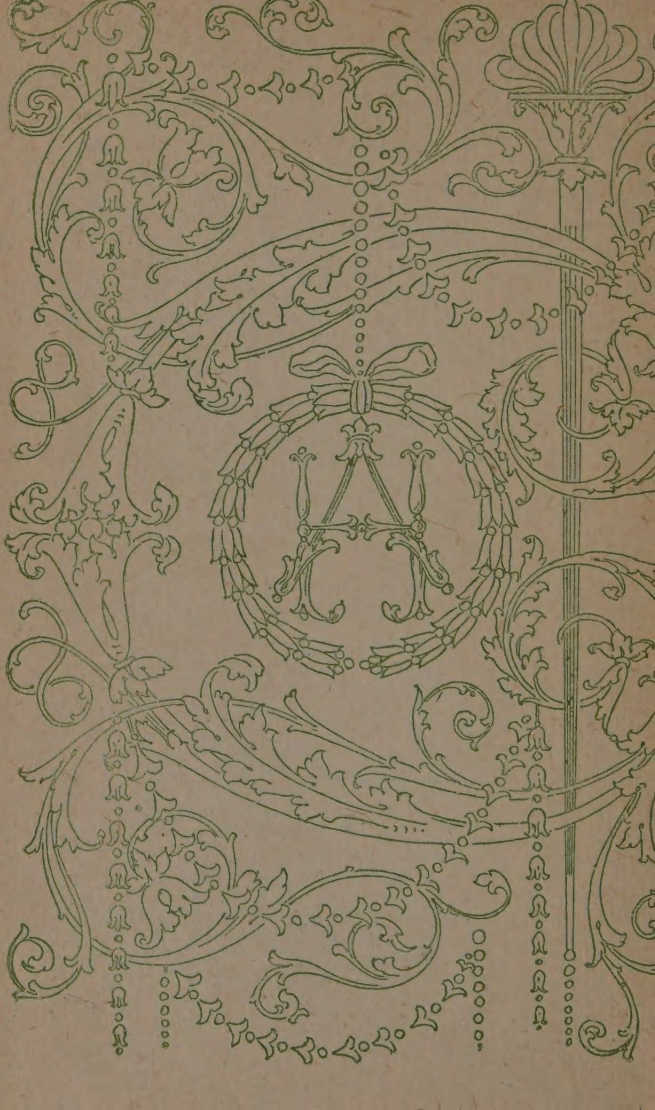

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